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#2 Women's Self Defense

STORIES & STRATEGIES of SURVIVAL

SOME GOALS OF THIS PROJECT ARE TO:

* GIVE EACH OTHER MORE OPTIONS TO CHOOSE FROM WHEN USING SELF-DEFENSE BY SHARING A DIVERSE RANGE OF STRATEGIES SUCCESSFULLY USED BY PEOPLE IN REAL LIFE SITUATIONS.

* HELP SURVIVORS/DEFENDERS OVERCOME ISOLATION AFTER ASSAULT AND BEGIN TO HEAL.

* EXPAND OUR NOTIONS OF WHAT "SUCCESSFULL SELF DEFENSE" IS AND HELP EACH OTHER APPRECIATE ALL OF THE WAYS WE KEEP OURSELVES SAFE.

* BREAK THE STIGMA + MYTHS AROUND SEXUAL ASSAULT/ABUSE SO THAT WE CAN TALK ABOUT IT, TAKE ACTION, AND OVERCOME IT.

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*A NOTE TO READERS: AS ANY OF THE AUTHORS/ARTISTS CAN TELL YOU, IN ADDITION TO BEING EMPOWERING, IT CAN BE VERY TRYING TO TELL OUR STORIES. FOR ME, WRITING ABOUT ASSAULT AND ABUSE BRINGS UP THE INTENSE EMOTIONS I FELT AT THE TIME IT HAPPENED. THE SAME THING CAN HAPPEN TO PEOPLE WHO READ THESE STORIES. THE STORIES CAN BE TRIGGERING. SO PLEASE CHECK IN WITH YOURSELF + TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF AS YOU READ. IT CAN HELP TO HAVE A GOOD FRIEND AROUND TO TALK WITH.

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PO BOX 2433
CHAMPAIGN, IL 61825

This zine is /1000

SELF DEFENSE IS:

I have healed much through naming what I have survived and having my story acknowledged, and hearing/reading truths that tell me I am not alone

I look in the mirror, and can honestly admire the ovarios on me

I am one awesome strong woman

I wrote a song about street harassment

I yelled back

I informed 2 women walking the opposite direction about the heckler

I decided to do an experiment

I keep yelling back

I became a certified medical advocate for Chicago's Rape Victim Advocates—now I get to make sure that when a survivor wants to talk to the police, they are taken seriously

I can be threatening when I am cornered

I know I would have hit him if I had to

I am going to take a self-defense class this summer, no doubt

I am worth defending

I have the right to go anywhere I choose, wear anything I choose and say anything I desire

As a teacher and feminist I continue to speak out and encourage my sisters to open their eyes and mouths

I respond, "Let me down."

Gripping my glass bottle tighter, I instinctively lifted it over my shoulder

I snarled my rage back: "I will push you down those stairs. Get the fuck out of my way."

I created a piece of installation artwork about sexual assault to help my own healing and educate others

I followed, still holding the bottle over my shoulder poised

I leaned back to get a better view of the situation

I had to keep my eye on the receptionist who was female. Make sure she seems me and I see her

I was able to end the relationship

My mind and body helped me stay safe and keep going until I was in a place, years later, where I could deal with what I went through

I saw what was really going on

A thousand thoughts rushed through my brain

I felt my body react to his presence

Trust your body!

I made an attempt to circumvent his reason for touching me

I tried to intimidate him

I got my thoughts together

I used the broken record technique

Every time he attempted to touch me I would tell him to quit it and that I'd prefer he drive with both hands on the wheel

I was watching for a moment when I could jump from the car

I tried to appear calm

I told them to get the fuck away from me

My best bet was to keep focused and alert and keep the situation from escalating if I could

I bolted from the car door

I yanked my wrist away and ran

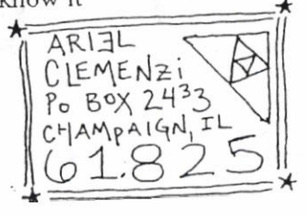
I didn't do anything until two weeks later when a friend urged me to call the police

I yelled "What do you think you're doing? Get the fuck away from me!"

Violation is never our fault

We are so worth defending

We need to keep speaking the truth as we know it



SELF DEFENSE IS:

I wiggled to the far side of the bed
I mumbled "No's"
I said it loud enough to break through your drunk, stoned haze
I was describing an abuse of power and trust
I called my two best friends for consolement and eventually ran to one of their houses to cry
I am writing to let you know that you need to make a formal apology to my brother and parents for what you did to me
I started training in self-defense, boxing, and karate
I walked out screaming
We marched in "Take Back The Night" marches
I became a self-defense teacher
We started to trust our instincts
We started being our own informal researchers
I communicate the basic principles of choosing to resist against an armed attacker
Her moment to resist appeared in her mind. She seized that moment
She was able to reach into his pants pocket and get his keys out and drive herself away
We talk about practicing verbal communication at times when you are not the target
I teach people to seek allies, and to be an ally every time they can
I try to get others to be involved in anti-violence efforts like working the shelters
I offered a free self-defense seminar
I encourage survivors to talk to each other
I drew pictures of the men
I can help prevent rape
I filed charges against him
The women came together to complain
She made posters and hung them up all over campus
I let the librarian know what happened
I walked away and told my boss what happened
I turned around and kicked the perpetrator in the shin with my steel-toed boots
I sent a copy of my written diary of the events to the federal agent in charge of the case
I was afraid, but persevered
I'm going to testify and finish this process
Hope has been established in me that we can change things
When I am cat-called on the street I cat-call back
When drunken men have grabbed my ass on a crowded street I have punched back
She bit hard
I am making them accountable not just to me, but to their friends and family if they have them, and to society at large
I got a feeling of something not quite right
I chased the man back, calling, "No!..."
I started to back away
I started to scream in short blasts
I kept squalling, and he ran
I told Greg what had happened
The women support one another and discuss how to create an action plan to get themselves and their children out of the house and away from the abuser
We shared ideas and strategies for awareness
I made it clear that I wanted out of the marriage
I was so angry
I knew I'd eventually leave this person
I got my stuff together and got up to leave
I never could call what happened that night what it was, rape, until winter of 2000
She and I are determined that she make it to adult womanhood with the ability to expect that her boundaries be respected, name any infractions for what they are, and hold the person(s) accountable
I intend to support her wholeheartedly

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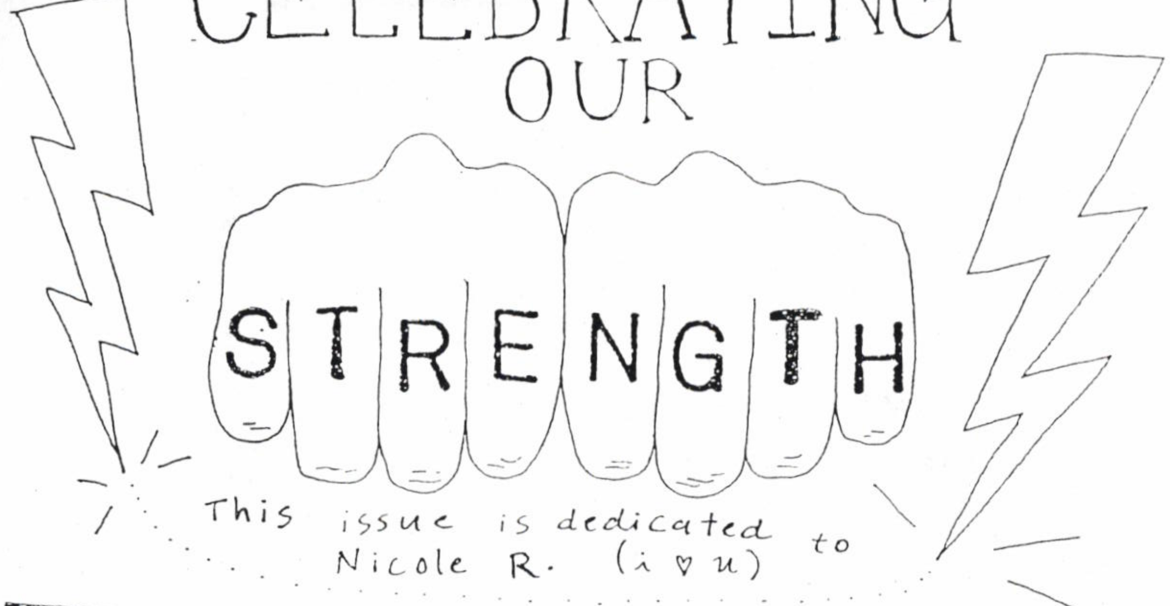
CELEBRATING OUR STRENGTH



This issue is dedicated to Nicole R. (i ♥ u)

THANK YOU

A HUGE RAG 'N ROLL THANK YOU TO THE RAP MISTRESS MEGAN WELLS FOR PUTTING IN COUNTLESS HOURS OF EDITING, INSPIRATION, + ART EXPERTISE .. INCLUDING THE COVER ART ☟ IF U WANT MORE OF MEGAN'S ART IN YOUR WORLD YOU CAN (+ SHOULD) CONTACT HER AT: PO BOX 5027 CHICAGO, IL 60680 ★ OR AT: hicapalta@hotmail.com

× TO ALL OF THE AUTORS & ARTISTS WHO MADE THIS ZINE HAPPEN!!

MUCHAS GRACIAS TO IVANNA B. WHO ♥ CONTINUES TO ROCK MY WORLD WITH HER RAD FRIENDSHIP, DJ-ING, + DRAGON MAKING SKILLS... NOT TO MENTION THAT SHE SINGLE HANDEDLY DISTROED SCORES OF ZINES. (VIVA LAS BLOODY CONCHAS!!)

THANK YOU KIM FOR INSPIRING ME TO BRING CLOSURE TO AN ASSAULT + FOR COLLABORATING WITH ME ON THE "DEAR FRIENDS..." ARTICLE. ★ THANK YOU MEREDITH FOR INPUT + IDEAS ON ARTICLES. ★ THANK YOU TO FRIENDS NEW + OLD WHO INSPIRE ME: ADAS, NONNA LUCIA, [illegible]CE, BEN, THE CWHBC CREW, LOREN, JULIA, LIZRD, LAURA, INGA, NANXI, ANN, RACHEL, MOLLY ☆ EVERYONE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE FESTIVAL OF UNRESTIVAL: JOHANNA, KAY BARRETT, EDITH [illegible]UCIO, REBEL GRRRL COLLECTIVE, THE VIOLENTS, THE COUGHS, E.E., SYSTEMIC INFECTION, CLINIC [illegible]CORTS (from rtr), JENNY B., JENNIE M., LIBERTE, + HOPE R.

THANX TO EVERYONE WHO HELPED DISTRIBUTE THIS ZINE + GET THE WORD OUT: ELKE ZOBL, ERIKA FROM PANDER ZINE DISTRO, JENNY FROM GRRRL STYLE DISTRO, LISA FROM DREAMER'S DISTRO, ALI @ BOXCAR BOOKS, PAM @ WOMEN + CHILDREN FIRST BOOKSTORE, ALL AT THE LUCY PARSONS CENTER, URBANA IMC, ELECTRIC HUMAN PROJECT DISTRO + EVERYONE ELSE!! ALSO TO UNDERGROUND DISTRO, TORONTO F's BOOKSTORE, ATOM, A-ZONE, REBECCA @ VEGAN DESSERTS

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

SELF DEFENSE IS:

I said "Ewww, put that back!"
I got sick of it and kicked him in the shin, hard, and ran
I explained to him that I didn't feel like talking
I told him to put it away
I felt proud for taking care of myself, and unremorseful
I said, "I don't appreciate your staring at me."
I knew that I was right for going with my instincts
I stood as far from him as possible
I yelled for all to hear, in the mass of people, "Next time, don't be a sexist asshole!!"
I felt somewhat good for addressing it
I was saying no
I found strength
I am a strong, independent gurl.
I got away from him
I was able to get the door open and run out before they could catch me
I raged and released my frustration, pain, and utter disgust
I quit my job and reported all of the men that were harassing me. Justice was served
Stand up for yourself and don't be ashamed
There are people out there that care
I turned to him and said, "I'm gonna start counting, and by the time I get to three, you better be moving away from here. ONE!!"
I shouted at the top of my lungs
I closed and locked the door
I drove off
I looked at him and said in a normal tone of voice, "Did I give you any indication that I wanted you to do that?"
I said, "Shame on you!"
I began to get very involved in social justice activism
I opened my eyes
I pushed you off the bed
She yelled at him while hitting him with her shoe
I gathered my sleeping bag and left
I am starting to seek counseling
After 10 seconds of frantic thinking of how to get his body off of mine I pushed him off of me and ran
I marched up to him and very loudly, clearly and firmly said "DON'T YOU EVER TRY ANYTHING LIKE THAT AGAIN."
I mentioned all this to a female friend of mine
We decided that we should do some type of an intervention with [the offender]
I declined his offer by saying "No thanks."
I told him that my boyfriend was the only person I wanted to kiss me
I told him "NO!" over and over again
The thought of kicking him stayed in my mind
I broke free from him and walked away
The women organized a neighborhood march
I had the chance to talk to a friend about what happened
I told my mom what had happened
I ignored him
I told him I was busy
I decided to tell him that I didn't appreciate how he acted and that if something like that ever happened again I would report it
If a person wants something from me that I don't want to give I don't have to do it
Other people's needs are not the priority
No one can take advantage of [me]
We arranged a meeting with another activist group that [the offender] was heavily involved with
We confronted him with each instance of inappropriate conduct
I did what I could to defend myself and my activist community
I finally told my mother who the assailant was
[I wrote to the offender] to ask for an apology

Chicago Rape Crisis Hotline
1-888-293-2080

Books:
Check out your local library, or feminist bookstore for more titles!
Allies in Healing: When the Person You Love Was Sexually Abused as a Child~ Laura Davis
Choices: Sexual Assault Prevention Workbook For Persons With Physical Disabilities~ Ellen Shaman
Courage to Heal: A Guide for Women Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse~ Ellen Bass
Her Wits About Her: Self-Defense Success Stories by Women ~Denise Caignon, Gail Groves
Self Defense: Steps to Succeed ~Joan M. Nelson
Self-Defense: The Womanly Art of Self-Care, Intuition, and Choice ~Debbie Leung
Self Respect and Sexual Assault ~Jeanette Mauro-Cochrane
Stopping Rape: Successful Survival Strategies ~Pauline Bart

Zines/Music:
Of course there are way more zines that touch the topic of sexual assault/abuse/ harassment then the ones presented here. These are some I've come across recently. If you do a zine, or know of one on this topic, send it to me and I'll review it for the 3rd issue.

Free to Fight compilation put out on Candyass Records. Comes with a rad zine that has success stories in it as well as "how to" info.

Stop Rape Now an international female vocals punk comp to benefit home alive
put out on Outcast Records ... comes w/ a zine.

Out of the Vacuum by Liz Defiance
contact: lizdefiance@hotmail.com
This is one of the most amazing zines on the subject of sexual assault I have ever seen! Liz tells several of her personal stories about dealing with sexual assault and harassment from known and unknown assailants. In addition to sharing numerous physical and verbal self-defense techniques, she does a great job of looking at each situation critically. She raises lots of tough questions that got me thinking like, "Is it self defense only in the moment, and if you go get somebody afterward then it's violence?" She leaves these questions unanswered and lets her readers battle out the ethics on their own.

Radical Slut Dis-Covery: Building & Re-Building Our Sexual Selves
By Midge and Emiliah contact: **fecuntah@yahoo.com**
Two courageous women share their stories about relationship violence and the proactive steps they are taking to heal from it. There is a section on "Bodywork, Belly Dancing, and Yoga" as well as a lengthy one on confronting an assailant who is part of your social network, and one on community involvement.

intro

Welcome to the second annual issue of the Women's Self-Defense zine!

In this issue you will find a mixture of personal stories, articles, commix, and interviews about self-defense. While the title is *Women's* Self-Defense this publication is a resource that is intended to be accessible to many communities of people.
This is an ongoing project with no end in sight so I encourage everyone to send submissions.

The process of collecting these stories has been intense and amazing. I am so grateful to all of the people who shared their stories, art, ideas, and feedback with me. This zine could not have happened without you!

Personal self-defense success stories about overcoming violence and harassment make up the bulk of this zine. In the stories the authors describe strategies they used to 1) end assault, 2) bring closure to her healing process after assault, 3) bring the perpetrator(s) to justice, 4) intervene on the behalf of another person targeted for assault, 5) contribute to a greater anti-violence movement, 6) confront verbal harassment, and more.

I encourage you to make reading his zine an interactive process. You can do this by trying to pick out all of the proactive strategies the authors write about while you read each story. For your convenience I have pulled out many of these strategies and compiled them in the back of the zine. You can reference them under the heading "Self Defense Is..." (page 67) I have done this to help everyone focus on the empowering things that the authors have done because I believe our society often trains us to focus on the negative things that are being done to the defenders.

I chose the subtitle for this zine, "Stories and Strategies of Survival" because it is by paying attention to these proactive deeds of the authors that you, the reader, are able to learn some self-defense strategies. Many of the authors describe physical, verbal, and psychological techniques that enabled them to end a dangerous/unwanted situation. These techniques include naming the unwanted behavior of the perpetrator, criticizing the behavior of the perpetrator, stating her needs clearly, yelling at the perpetrator, using everyday objects as impromptu weapons, shouting commands at the assailant, running to a safe spot, asking those around her for help or support, confronting a known assailant in person or through a letter, encouraging/teaching other women to defend themselves, reaching out to people who are targeted for violence, talking back to verbal harassment/bigotry, working with other women as a team, and many many more. You are more then welcome to write to me and point out strategies within the stories that I have not included in the end compilation. See how many you can find!

I received several letters from people (mostly folks who run distributions) who said they thought the title of this zine was misleading in that they expected to find step-by-step instructions for self-

defense. I think this is kind of funny because those people really missed the point of the zine. That was: there is NO step-by-step formula to self-defense. People can choose (and I would highly recommend) to take a self-defense class to learn techniques which they can choose to incorporate into their self-defense "tool bag", but the uniqueness of each defender plus the uniqueness of the circumstances of each assault equals an endless list of possibilities for how to handle the situation, and in the moment we each make the best decisions we possibly can. The closest this zine comes to being a "how to" guide is that it shows how real people have chosen to defend themselves. The idea is to show how diverse self-defense can be, and in doing so I hope that everyone who reads this zine will come away with at least one new technique they feel they could use. The majority of the self-defense techniques are not spelled out for you but lie within each woman's words, and pictures. There is a brief resource listing in the back of the zine for further reading on self-defense for people who want more and different kinds of information.

Having said this, I did include several pieces that illustrate self-defense techniques in a more "how to" way. The art by Megan, Isy, as well as the article on using your voice is meant to give more straightforward depictions of self-defense strategies. I'm really happy that there is more art in this issue, and I hope that more people contribute art for the 3rd issue. Diversify the medium... Yeah! On that note...

Women learn from women's lives-- so share your stories and ideas for the 3rd issue of this zine. Topics include (but are not limited to) the following:
How have you used self-defense in YOUR life? What does self-defense mean to you? How have you respond to street harassment, harassment at work etc.? Have you taken/taught a self-defense class? What did you think about it? Have you stopped a dangerous situation before it escalated to assault? Have you confronted a known assailant? Have you helped another person get out of a violent/dangerous situation? How have you dealt with the aftermath of assault/harassment? What have you found helpful in your healing from assault/abuse? What kinds of things did friends/family do to support you or that helped you to heal? What do you wish people hadn't done when they tried to support you? What books or resources would you recommend to survivors? Did you receive support from a women's group or from the police? Did you file a police report or take an assailant to court? What was that process like? Were you able to get out of an abusive relationship? What signs do you look for to see if a person or situation is dangerous? Have you organized or participated in a Take Back The Night rally? Have you taken part in a speak out against sexual assault/abuse? You get the idea... the possibilities are endless! Submissions can be anything from comics to stories, from articles to journal entries, art, photos, poetry, rants, interviews, resources, etc. The zine will be legal sized paper (8.5" X 14") folded in half, so you can design your own page(s) or just send things to me and I'll put it together. Submissions can be made under a pen name or be anonymous.

♡ RESOURCES ♡

(This is a small, incomplete list of what's out there. Send me the names/contact info of good books/ resources you know of for issue #3.)

Self-Defense Organizations:
You can find places that offer classes in your area by looking in the phonebook under "Self Defense". There are surly lots of great organizations out there, but there are also not so great ones where the instructors are patronizing etc. If you are not going on the recommendation of a friend who has taken the course then be sure to ask the instructor lots of questions about the content and philosophy of the course. I've found that the most empowering courses are the ones that are not afraid to call themselves feminist in philosophy. With the exception of RAD I've taken classes at all of the following places and I recommend them.

Chimera: Based out of Madison Wisconsin, with chapters in other states as well, this is one of the oldest feminist self-defense organizations out there. 128 E. Olin Ave. Madison, WI 53713 (608) 251-5126

Girl Army: Girl Army began in 1994 through Suigetsukan, a collectively run, non-profit marital arts school in Oakland. They hold classes at various places in the Bay Area. (415) 835.4728

Home Alive: Based out of Seattle, WA this group offers free self-defense classes (206) 720-0606 www.homealive.org Even if you do not live in the Seattle area check out their web page for a great listing of resources in addition to the ones listed below including books and hotline numbers.

Impact (formerly known as Model Mugging): They have chapters in 16 states as well as Canada, Switzerland, and Australia. Their classes are usually expensive (several hundred), but well worth it, and they do offer some scholarships. 1-800-345-KICK www.bamm.org

RAD I've never taken one of these classes, so I can't personally vouch for them, but I've heard they are good. Both men and women teach these classes, and they have locations all over the country. http://www.rad-systems.com (757) 868-4400

Thousand Waves Martial Arts and Self-Defense Center, NFP:
See the inteview with Kyoshi Nancy on page for more info
1220 W. Belmont Ave. Chicago, IL 60657
(773) 472-7663 http://thousandwaves.org

Toll Free Hotlines:
National Domestic Violence Hotline
1-800-799-SAFE

National Child Abuse Hotline
1-800-422-4453

National Sexual Assault Hotline
1-800-865-HOPE

oftentimes feminist organizations (like the Cambridge women's Center in Massachusetts) offer free or low-cost support groups for survivors... or they can recomend where to find them.

BOOK REVIEW

Viramma: Life of An Untouchable by Megan

I've been reading this book called Viramma, Life of an Untouchable and this story, this woman is simply amazing. Viramma's story is told over ten years through her conversations with co-authors Josiane and Jean-Luc Racine. She speaks of her life as a member of the lowest caste in India, the "Untouchables" or, as they are now known, the Dalits ("the oppressed"). I always find the way people tell their stories interesting and Viramma's ability to tell her story through conversation is very natural and interesting to read. Though most of her time consisted of the daily labor of being an agricultural worker for a powerful family (literal serfdom), she also was known as a singer, a midwife, and a talented lamenter in her village. But this lady doesn't just sing, she can yell, too! Viramma definitely knows how to hold her ground (and use some wicked crude language!) and survive in her daily walks through the town. Viramma talks about one such moment in the registry's office during her younger years:

"One day I did my hair well, with flowers, I'd drawn a beautiful pottu and I was very neat. The civil servant was sitting at a table near the window. When he saw me walking past, he signaled to me to come in. I said to myself that he was a top man, a Sir, a civil servant, and that I should stop out of respect. Maybe he wanted me to sweep the pavement or the courtyard. I went into the room, covering my back with my sari and putting my palms together respectfully. And what did I see when I raised my eyes? His dick! A fat dick! He was holding it in one hand and he had money in the other. I screamed. I was trembling all over and I didn't know how to get out of the situation. I walked out screaming...I went in their thinking you must obey a village official and here's what he showed me: his dick and his money!"

The next day, the same thing happened to another woman from the village. The women came together to complain and the offender was transferred from the village immediately (but unfortunately not fired...).

Later on in her life, Viramma confronted many more men who harrassed her in public. She yelled at one while hitting him with her shoe, " 'Hey donkey! You want me to give you my blessing with a broom? You think you're Manmadan and you're calling me to be your wife? You piece of crud!' Nothing happens without the woman's say so, even if she is a Paratchi (Untouchable)." One of my favorite aspects of this book is how the translators really tried to capture Viramma's language. She called another guy a "donkey fucker" and a "juice drinker" (I never really got why drinking juice would be a bad thing but I'll take Viramma's word for it).

These confrontations are just a taste of all of the life experiences that make up the stories related in the book. We don't often hear the stories of illiterate women but due to the fact that Viramma's conversations were recorded, transcribed and translated we have the opportunity to hear her voice.

LETTERS:

Ariel Clemenzi
PO Box 2433
Champaign, IL 61825

Below are some letters I received after the first issue of this zine came out. I got many more orders then I did actual correspondence, and I hope that changes with this issue. Ideally, I'd like to hear from each person who has been touched in some way by this zine. So, after you read this please consider writing me a letter letting me know what you thought, what you liked, disliked, what you'd like to see in the next issue etc. I really appreciate communication, and even if it takes me a while I'll respond to every letter I get. If you would like to send a letter to one of the authors in particular please state that in your letter and I will do my best to forward it to that person.

12/30/01 Hey Ariel, I just wanted to write you before it leaves my mind. I just finished reading Women's Self-Defense cover to cover in one sitting and wanted to congratulate you for a job well done on something that must have taken a lot to put together, and encourage you to keep it up. Which I'm sure you will. I feel kinda strange writing all this, but I figure positive feedback can only be good. Your strength and fire are inspirational, remind me what I'm fighting for and give me some hope, something in short supply these days. In short, thanks. Keep it up. ~ Kenn, MA

Jan. 2002 Ms. Ariel Clemenzi, Hey lady, it was really fucking nice to see you the other day, and your zine rocks. I am in Austin right now, I just got here yesterday. Seriously, I am really really glad and grateful that I have your zine with me because I have been reading it and it gives me confidence and strength, which is really important being in a new place and not knowing anyone! ... Love, Lani, TX

3/15/02 Dear Ariel- Thanx so much for sending me your zine. I'm living in an intentional community so I can pass it around to a lot of wimmin here. It's really good to see so many wimmin being able to write about their strength in the face of this fucked up patriarchal system! Yes! There is so much strength that can come out of anger. It is impressive to learn about the various techniques that different wimmin have used in different situations. ... Continued clarity in your work. ~Redmoonsong, MD

4/24/02 Dear Ariel, I picked up a copy of your Women's Self-Defense zine, and it was so inspiring that I used it with an all-girls workshop that I recently started. The students really enjoyed the excerpts we read. We wrote about times we felt disrespected on the street and we wrote comebacks as a writing exercise. Also, the women at the workshop really liked the bicycle comic from "Kick" zine, and Loolwa Kazoom's story and the list at the end where you pulled lines from all the stories. I enjoyed the range of the stories too. It gives me hope that women can survive and take an active role in their safety to affirm themselves. Take care, Tara, IL

11/15/02 Dear Ariel, I just read the Women's Self Defense zine. I just want to thank you and all the people who worked to put it together. It was really inspiring. I took a self-defense class a while back, and the zine has motivated me to get together a new group of ladies and have more classes. As is clear in the zine, one step at a time makes a difference towards self-protection and our protection of each other. Thank you! ~Leslie, LA

WHY I continue to DO THIS ZINE

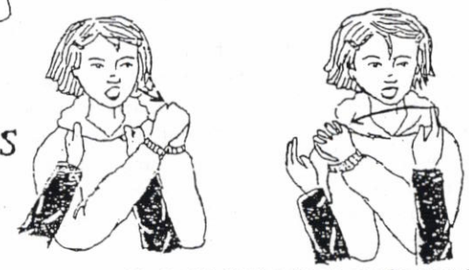
by ARIEL

As a young child I witnessed domestic violence in my home. At the age of 15, my first boyfriend, crying, told me that he had been sexually molested by one of his family members. During the summer of that same year one of my closest friends talked to me for the first time about why she was so desperately afraid of being alone in the dark. The reason was that she had been raped while walking home one dark evening. Later in life, it became known to our family that one of our family members had been silently enduring sexual abuse for many years. Unfortunately the list goes on. I am continually faced with the lasting effects that sexual assault leaves on the lives of so many of the people I care about—family, friends, lovers, and even myself. Sadly, the problem of sexual assault spreads far beyond my own circle of family and friends. Every 2 minutes someone is sexually assaulted in the U.S., and it is estimated that 18 million women and 3 million men, in this country alone, have been victim to some kind of sexual assault in their lives. I do this zine as a way to contribute to the anti-violence movement. I believe that by sharing our stories we can help ourselves and others to face the reality of sexual assault, help each other overcome the isolation that it brings, and break down the stigma that surrounds this issue so we can work to end the abuse.

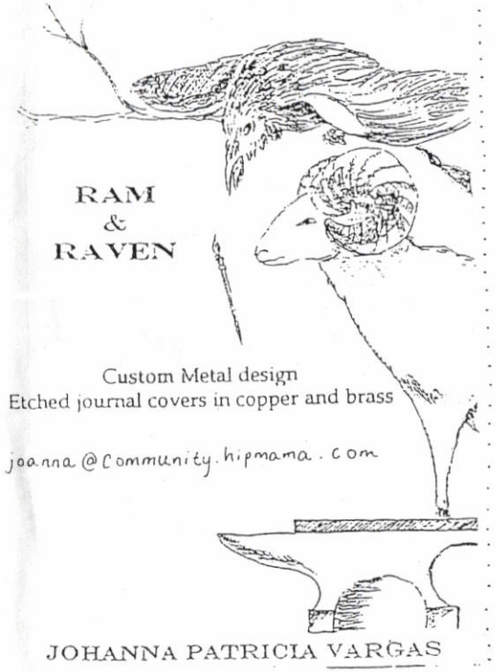
In the last zine I wrote about dealing with many instances of street harassment, stranger assault, and "date rape". I find that the closer I was to an assailant (the better I knew him/her), the harder it is to talk or write about the violence, so I had avoided the topic of domestic abuse in the last issue. But, as I said, some of my earliest childhood memories are of domestic violence, and so I want to address it. As a child I did not have many tools or resources I could use to cope with or end this violence. But that doesn't mean I didn't try. I remember one time in particular when my dad had locked himself and my mother in their bedroom. At the time she was pregnant. All my younger brother and I could hear was yelling, hitting, and crying. We may have been young but we had creativity on our side. We knew that our dad didn't act like this when other people were in the house. In fact, the domestic violence was hidden from family and friends by both of my parents for a long time. My brother and I decided that if we could trick my dad into thinking people were in the house then he'd stop his assault, at least temporarily.

We gathered together all of the shoes in the house. One pair at a time we put them on our hands, clomped them down the hall leading to their bedroom, and left them outside the bedroom door. Our logic was that dad would hear many shoes "walking" towards his bedroom door and then see them under the crack in the door. We thought he'd be fooled into thinking that people were standing in those shoes and listening to what was going on. How we wished that was true! I write this story for several reasons. Firstly because children lack many of the resources that adults have I want to encourage everyone to take notice of the children in your lives. Listen to them, believe them, and advocate for them. There are many young survivors who's voices are not represented in this zine. I also write this story to illustrate how creative people can get when attempting to deal with a violent situation. It is common for resisters of violence to use *whatever* resources they have available. In my case in the story my brother's and my resources were each other, our old

IF SOMEONE GRABS YOUR WRIST, GET OUT BY DOING A QUICK TWIST AGAINST THE THUMB (THE WEAKEST PART OF THE GRAB), UP & OVER THE ARM. YOU CAN DO THIS WITH BOTH WRISTS AT THE SAME TIME, TOO.



THIS ONE IS FOR IF SOMEONE GRABS YOUR SHIRT OR THROAT WITH BOTH HANDS. PUSH ONE HAND THROUGH THEIR ARMS, HOLD YOUR OTHER HAND, AND PUSH QUICKLY FROM ONE SIDE TO THE OTHER. TWIST YOUR HIPS & SHOULDERS TOO TO ADD POWER.



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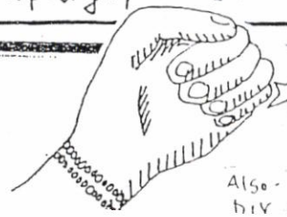

Also - Megan Wells + I do a zine called "Rock Out: Ideas on booking DIY [illegible]" [illegible] can get from Riveter for $2.00 ppd. rock!

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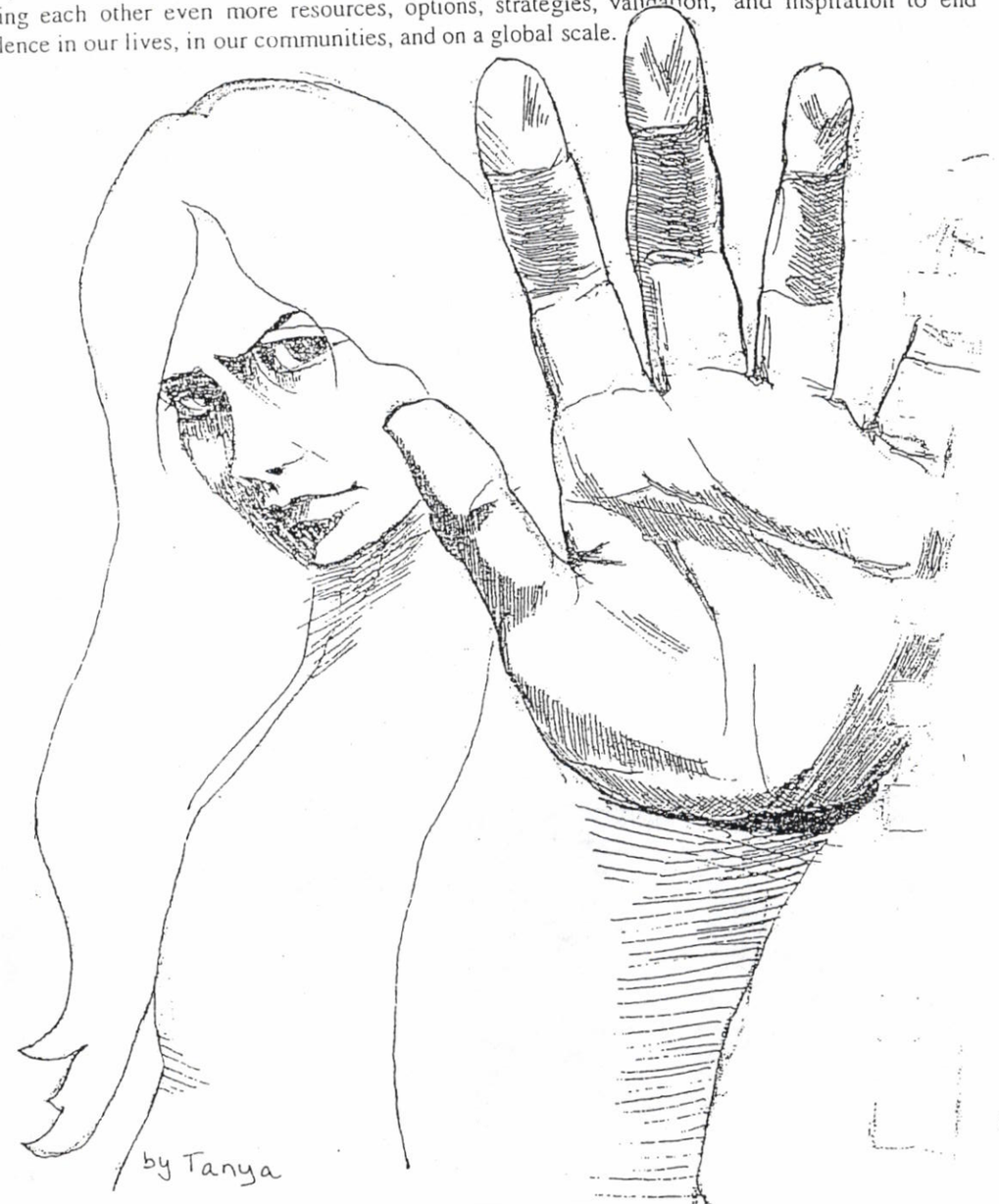
shoes, and our wits. As I grew older I learned more effective verbal, physical, and even psychological techniques that have become great resources in my personal struggles against violence. This zine brings that personal struggle to a community level because it is a result of many awesome people networking together, sharing our experiences and stories with the hopes of giving each other even more resources, options, strategies, validation, and inspiration to end violence in our lives, in our communities, and on a global scale.



by Tanya

The First Time I Defended Myself

By Liz Defiance

I was 7 years old, playing hide and seek with some boys in the church basement while my parents were upstairs teaching youth group, during that one year that my family decided maybe they should develop religious roots. I didn't mind, since hour-long sessions of hide and seek in the spooky abandoned basement were fun for me.

This time, though, one of the boys who was a couple years older than I was took his dick out of his pants and wouldn't put it away, ignoring me when I said "Ewww, put that back!" It was the first time I had seen a penis. I was scared and though I wasn't sure what was going on, I knew it was something I'd get in trouble for. I felt sick and didn't want to be around him, but he kept following me around, still with his dick out.

Eventually, I got sick of it and kicked him in the shin, hard, and ran back upstairs, where my parents were. The boy came upstairs, crying, and told the adults what I'd done. "He had his thing out!" I said, feeling like I'd been punched in the stomach. Remember not having an understanding of what some things (masturbation, clits, naked people, etc.) are, but thinking they're dirty and you can get in trouble for any association with them? I felt that.

My dad yelled at me for kicking the boy. That was the first time in my life that I realized my parents didn't know everything. I knew that I was right for going with my instincts, even though I didn't realize it wasn't my fault that boy was showing me his dick and ignoring me when I told him to put it away. I just felt proud for taking care of myself, and unremorseful - but I sill cried because I was sure my father was wrong, and I would never trust him the same way again.

Liz Defiance is the author of Death of a Psyche *zine, and* Out of the Vacuum. *For more info on* Out of the Vacuum *and how to reach Liz, see the Resources listing at the end of the zine.*

A: So I thought that was a really important, and beautiful gesture and I'm wondering if you'd like to comment on that.

N: Well, I felt so hopeless and sad at that time, and it's easy to feel hopeless, and that the world is just a dreadful place. Violence killed so many people in New York city and then we were going to go kill thousands of these people in Afghanistan, and just on and on and on. So when I meditated after September 11th, the image just kept coming back to me to work locally. *Think globally, act locally.* And I'm a self-defense teacher, I know about violence and so I can teach people to counter that violence because the more empowered people are the less likely they are to behave violently. So I was just driven to return to my core work at that time. It seemed such a natural, easy thing to do to reach out to the Muslim community and offer support. It was useful to me to counter my own feelings of hopelessness, and it was in that spirit of intervention that we talked about earlier.

A: My next question is for survivors of violence. Healing from past sexual assault is something that comes up in most self-defense classes and for many people this can be a challenging, ongoing process. Do you have any words of wisdom to share with survivors who are looking to heal?

I really really encourage survivors to talk to each other because one of the other things that we get from abuse and violence is the feeling like we're the only ones, no one could possibly understand the things that have happened to me. And as you know, we may have different details in our stories, but essentially they are all interconnected, and we can receive really really important support by sharing our stories with other survivors.

A: Yeah, totally. [Pause] I just have a couple more questions. What is your favorite self-defense technique?

N: [Thinking...] My favorite self-defense technique is a strong voice.

A: Lastly, would you like to share one of your own personal self-defense success stories?

N: [Thinking...] Wow. It's been a really long time since I've had a conflict that frightened me in any kind of a way that I can frame a story around it.

A: Well, that in and of itself is a success!

[Unfortunately the tape cuts off here, and so the very end of the interview is unrecorded, but Kyoshi Nancy went on to describe a time when she saw two men yelling at each other across the street from the dojo. It looked as though the men would soon escalate the situation into physical violence. Keeping the distance of the road between herself and the yelling men Kyoshi Nancy called out to them telling them that there were more peaceful ways to deal with their conflict. She told the men to step away from each other, to take deep breaths, to talk about the dispute calmly, etc. Hearing her words the men stopped fighting, got into their cars, and drove away.]

For more information on how to reach Kyoshi Nancy and Thousand Waves see the "RESOURCES" listing at the end of this zine.

A: Has there been enough research done on how violence against the gay community is different from violence against women?

N: There has been some research done on this in the last 10 years—very useful research. It's just starting to be gathered and distributed. And there are a lot of gay and lesbian martial artists who might focus on this issue. Some of the safety issues *are* quite different, like for example gay males have a much higher preponderance of group attacks, and [assailants] using club and stick weapons. So, that might be a very esoteric concept to cover in a 12-hour women only class, but it's a very core topic to cover in a gay and lesbian class. There is actually more difference in the content from a gay and lesbian class then from a women only class and a co-ed class.

A: It's interesting because like you said, it is not uncommon to hear of group assaults, especially in regards to homophobic violence, but it is rare to hear of group or community *defense*. A lot of times people think of self-defense as one person versus one or more assailants. How can we broaden this idea of self-defense to encourage communities to come together to confront and end violence?

N: Well, one main way that we do that in our curriculum is by including content about broader antiviolence initiatives. Like, we include intervention in *all* of our curriculum, even our 2-hour curriculum has part of the time spent addressing violence that is not directed at you. We talk about that in terms of practicing speaking up; practicing verbal communication at times when you are not the target. So that if you're white to practice by—there's so many opportunities unfortunately— saying, "I don't tolerate racist jokes in my house and if you continue to talk like that you're not welcome here." And for a straight person to say, "Don't assume that I agree with your homophobic talk. I'm straight but I'm not bigoted." And to practice in those kinds of situations. So, we keep that as a verbal skill, and then we also discuss in some detail the difficult situation of intervening in physical violence, and how to make intelligent choices around that without compromising your own safety. So, I think that's one level: just to get people feeling that they can be allies to other people in trouble. And also to get defenders to think that searching for an ally is a good strategy, and just alerting other people to what's going on. Don't assume that no one will help you. There's a big movement out there that says: Don't yell 'Help' no one will come, only yell 'Fire'. It's a very cynical attitude that assumes that no one will be involved if they're not directly threatened themselves. I don't believe that, and I don't teach that. I think it's a very hopeless way to approach life in urban communities. So, I go about teaching people to seek allies, that many times there are allies there, and to *be* an ally every time they can. As well as of course, trying to get them to be involved in other antiviolence efforts like working the shelters, volunteering as a counselor, and all the many many places you can be of service.

A: One thing I thought was a beautiful gesture towards initiating community defense was something that you did after September 11th. At that time there was a lot of racist violence targeted towards Muslim Mosques on the south side of Chicago, and Thousand Waves sent letters to some of those Mosques offering your support...

N: And a free self-defense seminar.

A: *And* a free self-defense seminar.

N: Yeah.

Narrow Escape on a Beach in Thailand

By Ayun Halliday

Hua Hin, Thailand 1993: Greg and I were staying in a Buddhist monastery as the guests of a monk (previously a Saghu in India...) from Surinam. We went to a gorgeous beach everyday. There was a lot of construction in the area ~ luxury hotels going up ~ the workers lived packed in 2 story barracks made of corrugated iron, windowless in that blazing heat. The monk gave most of the food he received on his daily alms rounds to the workers' children as we passed their miserable home en route to the beach. One afternoon, I couldn't bear to leave the beach when Greg and the monk headed back. I took my book down to the water's edge and sat in the surf, facing the ocean. I got a feeling of something not quite right and turned to see a shirtless man absconding with my clothes, disposable camera and sarong, which I'd left some distance behind me. My 1st thought was that I did not want to walk past the construction workers' home and up the hill to a monastery wearing only a bikini. I chased the man back into the dunes, calling, "No! Please! Don't take my stuff!" On the other side of the dunes he stopped and faced me, gestured that I should lay beneath a tree, saying probably his only English word as a command: "Okay. Okay." I started to back away and he pounced, trying to force me to the ground. We were the same height, thought I was probably 5 years older at least, at 28- I can't remember, I think he was feverishly pawing me, trying to kiss my neck. I remember a circular tattoo above his breast, a sort of mandala. I started to scream in short blasts, like a car alarm. He leaned back and punched me in the forehead, the only time I've ever been punched in the face. I kept squalling, and he ran down one of the many paths leading into the scrubby woods. I retreated to the beach side of the dunes, the image of myself with my throat slit under that merciless, gorgeous sunny sky quite clear. After 5 minutes or so I nervously picked my way back to the scene of the struggle, and retrieved my trousers, which he had dropped in his haste to escape. He had stolen my shirt, my sarong, my camera. Can't remember who ended up with my shoes. Feeling ashamed (I should have felt lucky) I made my way back to the monastery, a purple bruise forming above my eyebrows. Told Greg what had happened. When we told the monk and asked him to go with us to the police, he told us that they would probably do nothing, it would take at least half a day to file the report, there was an army base near by and probably half the guys in the area had a circular tattoo on their chests. We left the next day without having filed a report.

Ayun is the author of the very awesome zine East Village Inky *and also of the book* The Big Rumpus. *You can learn more about her rad projects at http://www.ayunhalliday.com*

A Story About A Girl Who Put Others Before Herself

By Stefanie

I'm generally a very nice person to all people. I don't hesitate to go out of my way for others and I get a great sense of satisfaction when I do. But for a long time I put other people's needs before my own. (This is something I have been in therapy for so I'm getting better all the time.) I think I picked up this behavior from my dad- who currently takes care of others and not himself. He has taught me the importance of helping others, but never the importance of helping myself. And so my life has been a continuum of being taken advantage of. Until one day.

I've been in community college for a total of 2 years now. And throughout those years I have had the misfortune to come across at least two people who just couldn't get the message. The first incident, the one I learned a lot from, happened during my first semester. My first class was called Weight Training. It should've been called "Sit on a Bench and Talk to People You Don't Really Like Just to Pass Time." Everyday I'd walk from the women's locker room across the gym entrance and into the weight room. It was a nice stroll, only took a minute at the most. And everyday I would see the same older man sitting on the bottom step of the staircase inside the gym. He would sit in the corner and look as if that was the only spot in the world he wanted to be in. He would act really friendly to every passerby even though no one ever spoke to him. I felt bad for the gig guy so I one day accepted his call for some company. What a mistake!

He introduced himself as Freddy, real name Alfredo. He said he was a student at the school taking only physical education classes. He explained to me that he had gotten into a really bad car crash a few years ago that sent him into a coma and eventually he lost his ability to speak. It turned out that the accident was caused by him driving under the influence. He seemed really ashamed about what he had done.

So here you have it: a verbally and somewhat physically handicapped man named Freddy and me, an innocent-looking 17 year-old girl. He's a lonely man looking for a friend and I'm a girl looking to help out people like him.

No more than a month goes by and we learn a bit about one another. I tell him about my anxiety disorder and depression. His response: "Hang in there, it's not that bad. I mean, look at me!" At the time he was the only voice of comfort I had. How could I not show my appreciation to him? One day I found out exactly how he wanted me to show my appreciation.

I had been feeling extremely low since my boyfriend and I split and I didn't have anyone who I could lean on. After another boring lass of discovering muscles I hadn't known existed, I ran into Freddy. Began to initiate a conversation as I tried to explain to him that I didn't feel like talking. But he kept insisting that he could make me feel better if I stayed wit him. But I didn't want to, I didn't want to be with anyone. Then he came up with the brilliant idea that a kiss from him would make everything better. I politely declined his offer by saying "No thanks" and "I have a

by TANYA

N: I love the movements on a very deep level that make me feel more free and more powerful and more in charge.

A: The physical movements?

N: The physical movements of martial movement. I *love* that at a very very deep level. I also have seen, starting in myself and in the people that I do work with, the way that practicing these arts transforms us and allows us to be actually more openhearted, and more engaged in life, and able to be more connected to people because our fears are more realistic, and they are more specific. It's not like you're enveloped in a cloud of fear your whole life. And that's what keeps me training, is that positive transformation that I see in myself, and that I see in my students.

A: That's something that I feel I've gained by studying here in the dojo—that sense of being less constricted by fear.

N: Great.

A: I think this would be a good time to talk about the self-defense classes you teach at Thousand Waves. You offer self-defense classes that are women only and also classes that are co-ed, and I'm wondering how the dynamics in the classes change when you're teaching, and what is the value of having women taught, women only self-defense classes, and what is the value of the co-ed classes?

N: It varies from class to class, so it's hard to generalize. And the curriculum, in terms of what we cover, is almost identical. And that's very deliberate because it's a curriculum that was based on women's self-defense. I feel really strongly that men need to be a part of the solution of violence against women and children, and in order to be part of the solution they have to be shown, and encouraged, and allowed to be allies. So it's not as if I don't think covering rape is an irrelevant issue in a co-ed self-defense course. It's not at all. It's a very relevant issue. One because men can be raped, and two because men have women in their lives who are raped. So in terms of content I really don't change it at all. We cover relationship violence, which is our word for domestic violence, or violence with intimates, and we cover that exactly the same in the co-ed class and in the women's class. So the content of what we teach is really not different.

In some classes there are women who self-select and go into the women only classes and I think they feel more comfortable there. There are other women that tell me that they enjoy having men in the class, one because they're amazed to have these ideas discussed in front of men, and to hear men's thinking on it, and to realize that maybe they have some stereotype notions that all men are like this when in fact they have an opportunity to experience alliances with men that are really healing of some of the results of gender violence. And also [my female students] like having male partners because they tend to feel they'll probably be attacked by a man, and they like the experience of working with bigger, taller, more massive people to test their techniques on. So, I like offering both [co-ed and women only classes], and I like that women can select which one is best for them. We also offer a gay and lesbian self-defense class, and then people can select there because frankly, we're all multiple identities right? So, who is to say whether a lesbian woman is going to feel more comfortable in a gay and lesbian class, a women only class, or a co-ed class? And vice a versa with men. I don't know whether some gay men would prefer to be in our gay and lesbian class, or in our co-ed class. But I like having the option.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 60

boyfriend (even though I really didn't) and he is the only one I want to kiss me." But he didn't get it.

"But I want to kiss you, you're my friend" he said. "Friends don't kiss" I replied. After realizing he was not going to persuade me using his voice he decided to try it out with his hands. He grabbed me as if he was going to lay a romantic, Fabioesque kiss on me. I told him "No!" over and over again. (This is what I had to say in response to an unwanted pass.) But he ignored me. People walking by ignored me. Why? What made these people think it was OK for him to be doing this to me? It wasn't friends playing around, it was serious. He seriously wanted to kiss me and I was seriously rejecting him. But it obviously wasn't working. The thought of kicking him stayed in my mind the entire time. But I refused to hurt him for two reasons. One: he had been hurt so seriously before I didn't want to add onto that. Two: I was afraid that I would get into trouble for acting violent and he would get off scot free. The only defense I could use was my voice and that was clearly not enough.

I finally broke free and walked away from him as he yelled "I'll see you tomorrow". What a wanker!! I was feeling pretty shaken up and found it impossible to learn how to graph a line using the quadratic formula in an equation with two variables. Math was not something I wanted at that time.

It wasn't until 2 hours later that I had the chance to talk to a friend about what happened. But even when I did, I didn't feel any better. All she said was "What a jerk!" Tell me something I don't already know!

When I got home that night I told my mom what happened. Her response was much more comforting than my friend's. She asked me if I wanted her to call the school. I said no because I didn't want him to get into trouble. I would just stop talking to him. And I did. I ignored him and sometimes would just say I was busy. I eventually decided to tell him that I didn't appreciate how he acted and that if something like that ever happened again I would report it. But my dad acted quicker then I could. The director of the P.E. department pulled me aside one morning and told me my father had called and told him what happened. He sat me down in an office with a female teacher because he thought it'd be easier to tell her the story. I just kept saying that I didn't want him to get into trouble and that this whole thing was pointless.

Finally I told her Freddy's name and explained all the details. She told me that he has pulled the same kind of thing on other girls as well. And my incident was the final one to get him removed from the campus. He was also told not to go within 40 feet of me again. It was a nice idea but he didn't give up. Some days he would enter the weight room, pretend to be in the class and slowly make his way closer to me. When he did this I left and my instructor would kindly tell him he couldn't use the facilities at that time. He eventually stopped showing up. I never saw him again.

CONTINUED →

I recall being 11 or 12 years-old and telling my mom that I was against violence. I also told her that if I were ever to be attacked by someone I wouldn't fight back so I would not hurt the other person. I am proud to say that has all changed. Since that day when Freddy forced himself on me I learned that if a person wants something from me that I don't want to give, I don't have to do it. Other people's needs are not the priority. I AM A WOMAN! And no one can take advantage of that!

A: Mm-hmm. A lot of times in self-defense classes these myths come up and the instructor is able to clarify them, but for women who don't take a self-defense what are some other ways that we can confront these myths in our lives?

N: Well, I think your zine is a great way.

A: [Laughs]

N: I mean, I do. I just think that we need to keep speaking the truth as we know it and telling success stories. I loved when the book Her Wits About Her[2] came out because I thought that was such a revolutionary idea: to talk about real-life experiences, especially success stories. And from when that book came out—even before that—we'd already sort of figured this out on our own, but I think that the teaching methodology of using success stories to counter what we hear on TV and read in the papers is great. We only hear about women's failures, and, you know, male's freedom to carry out whatever kind of violence it is that they intend to do. We're inundated with that, so anything that any individuals can do to spread success stories and talk about the truth rather then the myths is helpful.

A: So even talking with you friends...

N: Absolutely.

A: What do you consider to be a successful self-defense story?

N: Well, only the person who's in the experience can define it. And that's the key factor. It would be story to story. I mean, I've told stories in my class—particularly when we cover the weapons, in terms of dealing with the armed attackers part of my course—where I really rely on success stories to communicate the basic principles of choosing to resist against an armed attacker. And you know, some of the stories that I tell are brutal stories of horrible things that have happened to women. One story that I tell, which is a true story that a woman told me years ago from taking my class, is that she was abducted and taken out to the desert by a rapist. And when he got there he began to try to rape her, but he was sexually dysfunctional so he forced her to felicitate him, and that's when her moment to resist appeared in her mind. She seized that moment, she bit hard, and he went into deep shock and fell down. She was able to reach into his pants pocket and get his keys out of his pocket and drive herself away. So was she violated? Of course she was. And was she traumatized? Indeed. She defines that as a total success story, and so do I. So, that's an example of how we have to let that defining be for the survivor of the experiences.

A: Yeah. I think that with that story too, it becomes apparent that it can be really hard on the [self-defense] teachers to be hearing all of these stories, and to be confronted on a regular basis with the violence that has been going on against women. What has been inspiring to you personally that has kept you teaching for all these years.

[2] Editor's note: *Her Wits About Her: Self-Defense Success Stories by Women*. Edited by Denise Caignon and Gail Grove. Published by HarperCollins 1987.

own informal researchers because this was before Pauline Bart's book came out[1]-- and there really wasn't any systematic data to rely on that showed that self-defense worked. Except that we *knew* it worked because we would hear success stories, and we started to just—basically what we teach women today, trust our instincts that the stories we were hearing were following a pattern. That assertive, immediate, forceful responses worked the best, and pleading and begging, and those kinds of responses didn't seem to work so well; which was counter what we were being told at the time. The advice that police were giving women at *that* time was more towards these pleading, begging, 'try to humanize the situation' and nothing we were hearing bore out that that worked.

So the main source of this research was just talking to women survivors. And then there was a lot of work done by, a little bit by me, but more by the generation of women a little bit up from me, who started training in martial arts maybe 5 to 10 years before I did, who were very competent martial artists and they had learned "self-defense"—what their teachers had called self-defense—in their schools. But they knew that that kind of self-defense wasn't really relevant to women's needs. So they had already begun the process of figuring out how to take physical movements that could be relatively easily learned out of the martial arts and to teach them to people who weren't going to study over a long period of time; and then combine that with information about assertiveness, and using the voice, and basic [information on] what are your human rights regarding controlling your body. So some of that work had been done a little bit earlier and some of it was being created when I started teaching.

A: You mentioned that when you began teaching self-defense the police were still telling women that they should try begging and pleading to get out of a situation, and I think that there's a lot of that misinformation *still* going on today after decades of feminist research which shows that is not a safe strategy for ending assault. Another one of the myths that I find to be very common is the one that says most assaults are perpetrated by a 'stranger in the bushes', but as we know, the reality is that most assaults against women are committed by a person who the woman knows. Why do you think that there is so much misinformation about violence against women out there? Why does it persist?

N: Well, the media contributes to it to a great extent in terms of our information—we call it information—it's really just stories about violence that come from what we read in the newspaper, and see on TV. There are these stories that are considered newsworthy, but they are such a narrow part of the spectrum of stories that we experience regarding violence. I don't know if that is *the* major part of the part of the problem, but that certainly contributes to the lack of understanding that people have. And the other factor is just that—I mean Pauline Bart learned this in her study— it is harder for us to defend ourselves against someone that we know then someone that we don't know. Why? For two reasons: One because we don't understand what's happening until later; it takes longer for our mind to process this. And two, we're ambivalent about stopping someone because we have a complicated relationship with that person. We might like them and hate them, or love them and hate them both at the same time. I think that that same psychology operates on a societal level in terms of why we can't bear to think about the danger being from people that we know. So, we continue to have an ostrich approach where the head is in the sand of saying that 'I'm going to be attacked by somebody different from me'. I mean, it's the safety bubble mentality that we have because there is so much violence around us all the time that we have to focus on something that separates us from it. And it's easier to fear and dislike people who are different then we are.

[1] Editor's note: Pauline Bart is the author of the groundbreaking book *Stopping Rape: Successful Survival Strategies* published by Pergamon Press in 1985.

Meredith Stern

For the last women's self defense zine I wrote a story about traveling in Germany and being attacked by two men who tried to rape and strangle me. I escaped and hitched a ride to a police station where a report was filed and I drew pictures of the men. Since then I have been asked to testify in court against them and the legal process has begun.

I have very strong feelings against the prison system, the injustice towards poor people and people who are not white. I don't see prisons, as they are today, as working to solve or heal people who are hurt and damaged by our society. However, I also have no alternative solution to suggest for two men who have murdered a woman, and raped several more. Men who have been through the system several times and each time out continue to attack. If I can help prevent one rape, one murder, by these two men spending their lives in jail, then so be it. This is for that poor woman who has no voice, six feet under ground.

I was telephoned a few months after returning to the states and was told that one of the men had been caught in a bank robbery; he still had my credit card in his wallet (which he had stolen), and when questioned about it he admitted the charges I had filed against him. A federal agent was in charge of the case now; because it was international, and I was asked to send a copy of my written diary of the events. So I did, and was told that I may be asked to testify in court later; that they would fly me overseas. I heard nothing for about a year and a half; until a couple weeks ago. I had moved from New Orleans so I was contacted by a new agent; a woman who worked with the FBI in Pittsburgh. She worked in the violent crimes division; dealing primarily with children who were victims of rape and attempted murder and women suffering from domestic violence. She talked of some cases; of a six year old being raped, beaten, left for dead, who was able to reconstruct a picture of his face with the help of a character sketch artist. It made me feel sick. How many men- not that only men abuse but because the most violent cases are mostly by them- get away with this kind of violence and are never caught? Talking to her she was very reassuring, supportive and not like the local German police had been; who had improperly asked if I'd been partying with these men, or made the whole thing up.

I was asked to meet with two German officials, one man one woman, the FBI worker, and a female German translator, to recount the events and to look at a lineup video and distinguish the assailants. I was afraid, but persevered. The system in Germany is much different than in the states; no death penalty, and the victim's character is not admonished in court. There can be no questions of your sexual history, or accusations of your personality or intentions. And prison situations are said to be not as severely brutal as in many of the American prisons. I met with the group and they showed a video; one by one a face would appear, then the profile, then the person would walk back and forth and you would see the whole body. After each-I would have to

answer yes or no. I saw four faces before I was struck with the pasty, white, bitter face of one of the attackers and instantly my whole body shuttered in disgust, every muscle tensed and I felt a wave of nausea. I voiced by yes and we saw a second video. A few of the men seemed they could have been the second man, some I knew for certain weren't, but I couldn't give an absolute yes; I couldn't remember. I hadn't seen him speak, I interacted more with the first man and so I

told them so. Recounting the scenario wasn't so difficult, I was able to do so without breaking down emotionally, occasionally it was frustrating when something was communicated with difficulty and we had to run through it again to make sure it was right. The German officials hand wrote the entire testimony and we went through it again and then I signed each of the dozen pages. After it was over, I rode my bike home- my house is an eerie 8 minutes away from the new Pittsburgh FBI building, and went on with my day.

I was asked to testify in Germany against them in court, all expenses paid, and I can bring a family member. There is no trial date yet, but I expect it to be soon. I'm going to do it and finish this process. The FBI has told me that any and all counseling I need or want is available free of charge with someone experienced in trauma of this sort. I don't feel that I need it now; and they said even in a few years from now I am welcome to use the service. In the last couple years I have had nightmares, fear sleeping in a house where a door is unlocked, fear of people touching my neck, and sometimes my neck feels constricted and I feel like I can't breathe.

Since meeting with these people, some of the tension is gone, some of the fear is gone, and hope has been established in me that we can change things. Teaching each other self- defense is one way, giving each other active support through projects like this amazing zine is another. This situation has given me faith that sometimes we can really succeed in holding attackers accountable for their actions beyond just our defensive actions. When I am cat-called on the street I cat-call back. When drunken men have grabbed my ass on a crowded street I have punched back. Now, after being assaulted, I am making them accountable not just to me, but to their friends and family if they have them, and to their society at large. I don't believe in violence as a response for a non-violent action, nor do I believe that a violent action necessarily deserves a violent solution. I would not wish death on these men, but I do want them to have no opportunity to act again. Now they won't be able to attack any more women. In this case, their imprisonment means much more to me than beating the crap out of them ever could.

Meredith is a self-defense instructor who gives classes at the Women's Resource Center located at 121 N. Highland Avenue Pittsburgh, Pa. She is a columnist for Slug and Lettuce, *the author of* Crude Noise, *and the editor of* MINE: An Anthology of Women's Choices *zine. See call for submissions on page* *62.

Interview with Kyoshi Nancy Lanoue

Kyoshi Nancy Lanoue is the founder and one of the executive directors of Thousand Waves Martial Arts and Self-Defense Center, NFP in Chicago, Illinois. She has been studying martial arts since 1977 and holds the rank of 5th degree black belt in Seido Karate and 2nd degree black belt in Kajukenbo. She has been active in the women's self-defense movement since she began her martial arts study, and in 1979, she started a self-defense organization called SAFE, which conducted hundreds of workshops. Thousand Waves first opened in 1985 under the name the "Women's Gym" and in addition to offering a safe place for women to work out, the gym served as a dojo where Kyoshi Nancy taught Seido karate. Almost 20 years later, Kyoshi Nancy continues to teach both karate and self-defense at Thousand Waves. The Center offers ongoing instruction in Seido and Kajukenbo, as well as short-term self defense classes. I can't say enough good things about Kyoshi Nancy and Thousand Waves. I had the good fortune of studying Seido Karate there for one year (I wish it could have been longer, but I moved out of town!!), and it had a very positive impact on my life. I had the pleasure of interviewing Kyoshi Nancy in her office at Thousand Waves on May 15th, 2002.

A: When did you start teaching women's self-defense? And what led you to become a self-defense teacher?

N: I don't remember exactly when I taught my first seminar, but I started training in self-defense, boxing, and karate all at the same place, at the same time in 1977. At that time our school, which was a women's school called the Women's Martial Arts Center, in New York city, was a very activist school and we did a lot of demos, we did a lot of appearances at city hall, and at various places. We marched in "Take Back The Night" marches, and we were very active in the anti-violence movement that was being conducted by feminists at that time.

There was an urgent need for self-defense teachers because women were starting to talk about their experiences with violence, and coming forward, and we were positing self-defense as a useful healing mechanism for women who experienced violence. So, it was a time when there was a rush to create self-defense teachers and I naturally fell into it because I had had some teaching experience. My father was a teacher—he invented a form of survival swimming called "Drown Proofing"—and when I was a child I assisted him. He died when I was 12, and I took over a lot of his students that had been studying with him. So I had had some teaching experience in my childhood, and therefore it was easier for me to learn how to communicate, especially movement-based things. So I became a self-defense teacher, the long answer to your question, in a very short amount of time. I'd say within a year of beginning my own study I was already conducting workshops, and assisting in classes, and virtually teaching classes.

A: That's amazing. I feel like women nowadays are lucky in a way because we have a whole plethora of information and resources about women's self-defense—but it sounds like in 1977 you and your colleagues who were beginning to teach self-defense had to draw from scratch?

N: Absolutely. In terms of how it all happened, it began of course with listening to women's stories, and just accumulating data woman by woman of 'What happened to you? Where did it happen? How did it happen? How were you approached? How were you targeted? What did you do?' And we started being our

FREE KICKS AT THE PHARMACY

BY ARIEL

When I was 16 I used to work at a crappy place called C.V.S. which is a large chain convenience/pharmacy store on the east-coast. It was crappy because the bosses treated the employees like total subhumans, and paid us very low wages. There was a group of boys who came into the store frequently and while I would be "stocking and facing" (a corporate term for putting useless merchandise on the shelves) they would sexually harass me. There were 3 or 4 of them and all were quite young, I'd say in their early teens if that. They would follow me around and say stupid shit about how they wanted me to suck their dicks etc.

Nothing too creative, but they came in enough to make working there even more hellish. One while I was working on the cash register they came right up to me and made all kinds of rude gestures and noises right in front of my boss. I walked away and told my boss everything that they had been doing up till that point. Unfortunately he was not too supportive. He just asked me if I knew them, and when I said I didn't he seemed disinterested. The harassers got away, but they had seen me tell the manager about them so after that they stopped coming in.

A few days later I was "stocking and facing" in an isle by myself. I was bent over a box of useless merchandise when I felt a hand on my butt. Without thinking I turned around and kicked the perpetrator in the shin. At the time I wore heavy steel-toed boots. It turned out that the perpetrator was one of my "fellow" employees. He was standing there speechless while his friend, another employee, was standing next to him laughing. I didn't think it was funny. I had been through enough shit on this job. The friend of the perpetrator said I should cut them slack because it was the perpetrators last day on the job and he was "just trying to have a good time", I told them to get the fuck away from me... and they did. In fact, after I kicked that guy no one ever harassed me on that job again.

How to Cope...Write a Letter

By Kim

I had a long, difficult talk with my mom last night. Recently I was almost sexually assaulted by a client when I was social work counselor. It scared me and hurt more deeply than it should because I had an assault back from when I was 18 that I never recovered from and kept secret. I was molested by my brother's best friend J- and it was my first sexual experience. I didn't tell my family because it would have made things really awkward with our families being so close. I just wanted to keep it my shitty secret. So when the recent assault happened, I had to see a therapist but I couldn't afford to pay her so my parents helped. I just explained to them I had "skeletons in my closet" which of course my mom's been prying to find out about. I probably used that phrase so I could finally get them to get it out of me. It's just that I've never talked to my parents about emotional, sexual, or even biological issues...and that was the issue in the marathon call last night. I called home to say I was lonely and unhappy despite saying last week I was done with therapy and totally motivated to conquer the world. She said the fact that I'd kept the assault secret deeply hurt her as a mother. She watched me grow-up not as happy as I should have been, and she watched me make choices in my personal life that didn't make sense to her. She thought that if I confided in her, she could have provided the support I needed. Unfortunately, she said these things in a way that just laid guilt on me. I need to finish healing from a series of assaults and harassment and now I have to feel guilty that I didn't include my mom in the healing process!? I can't apologize for my perception of our relationship seven years ago. blah. arg. It hurts. It sucks. Does this shit ever go away?

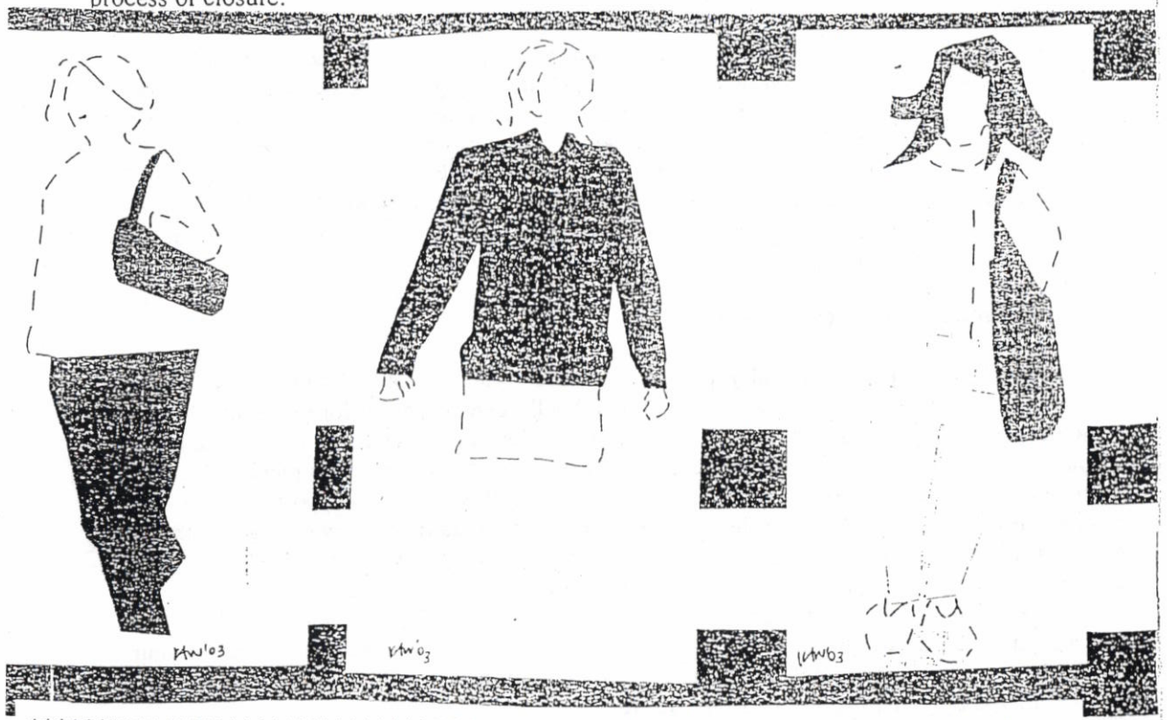
The conclusion of the call was actually positive because I finally told my mother who the assailant was and she made me promise to finish the letter I'd been drafting for months to J- and get the incident out of my head and into his lap where it belongs. I sent it the next day and he wrote back pretty quickly. Although he doesn't seem to understand the larger picture, I know he's having an internal struggle so maybe if he surrounds himself with good support networks, he can become a healthy person. Mailing the letter was not the conclusion for my struggle with the first sexual assault because I have to go through my family's struggle with the issue too. Now that they've survived the initial shock of the incident, things are almost back to normal. I don't think about J- every day and I don't feel like a walking skeleton closet, a victim, or a head of emotional baggage. Maybe my letter will inspire you to close some unfortunate chapter of your life. Or maybe it will help you feel like you're NOT the only one who was touched, molested, abused and betrayed by someone you trusted. Be strong.

Some advice about writing a letter:

- Dredge-up the horrific details to give the assailant a realistic idea of what you went through. This will force the perpetrator to recall the real set of events instead of whatever version keeps them sleeping soundly at night. You will read in the following letters how my assailant was in denial about what really happened.
- Be specific about what you want and in what format. In my case, I wanted an apology for myself and my family. Other women have wanted specific actions from the person

like making a community aware of their history as an abuser/assailant, banning them from some locations, requesting that they read certain books to raise their awareness about how assault affects survivors, or keeping a journal of how they are trying to improve. If you want the perpetrator to get counseling or support for their issues, then tell them to seek that support outside of your network. This way the perpetrator will need to create their own support network. You should never take on the role of counselor as you have given them enough of your mental energy already, and they need to work out their own shit.

- Be aware of what you might receive back: nothing, an unsatisfying letter, a disturbing call, etc.
- Try not to do this alone. In my case, I did not need help writing the letter, but it took encouragement to send it and I continue to seek help talking through the anti-climatic process of closure.



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September 22, 2002

J-

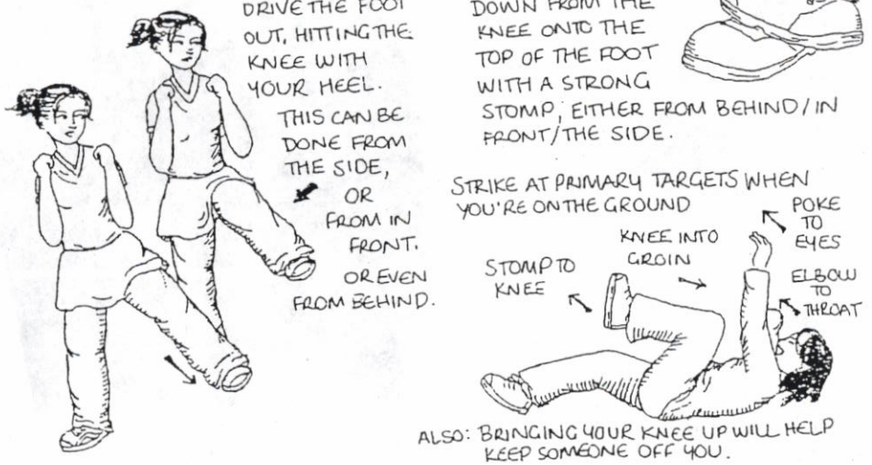
I'm writing to ask for an apology for something you did to me about six years ago. I've already forgiven you so it shouldn't be too hard. I'm going to tell you what I believe has happened to me since you did it. And hopefully you will understand some things about consequence, power and sexuality- and especially you'll just feel total remorse for what you did to me. I think you already know and I think you've been making it up to me for a long time- but without acknowledging it to me or yourself- that is the only way for a true apology or closure on my part.

better. Anyways, what I've been trying to get at this entire time was that just this past Fri. I went to the [Women's bookstore] and there, on the zine stand, I saw a copy of Women's Self Defense: Stories and Strategies of Survival. I picked it up and when I got home read the entire thing. It was nice to know that I wasn't by myself and also to know that there are people out there that care enough about this to create such a wonderful zine for such a wonderful cause. Thank you for that. It means a lot and thank you for listening.

~ Greta

P.S. I think it is noble of you to take on such an endeavor and to listen to what a lot of women have experienced and/or felt.

"Fighting Back" continued... by Isy

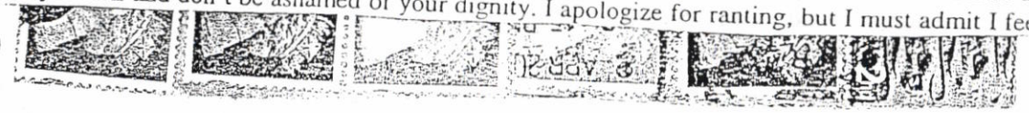


April 2002

Ariel,

I am writing to you during the calm after the storm. My story is rooted in the unfortunate and anger-working situation of sexual harassment in the work-place.

All of my life (and I am only 18 years old), my encounters with men have not always been the most healthy experiences. At the age of 9 I was sexually molested by my 16 year-old neighbor. That was an event in my life that I kept buried in the back of my brain until only a few months ago. As I hit my teen years I didn't date a lot. And being a bi-sexual teen in a small town is not the simplest thing to express to your peers. Well, I ended up having a series of not-so-good relationships. Now, I do not want to give off the impression that I was weak/defenseless and overly self-conscious. I am a strong, independent gurl. Always have been, always will. I was just confused and couldn't understand why I had such god-awful luck. I guess I figured back then that the more that I fooled around with guys the more it would make me forget about my past and also make me only like men. Well, in the long run all of that ended up hurting me more. Especially since I did a lot of the same things they did. In specific, drugs. Everything came to a point in my life where I was sick of everything. Especially with my treatment. I have always grown up believing I was feminist- growing up with 3 incredibly strong women in my life. But I was absolutely sick with the thought that I had allowed myself to put up with it as long as I did. So my senior year of high school arrived bringing me a new sense of myself and what to do with, well, me. So in the fall of 2001 I moved to go to art school. And I just seemed to carry my old bad luck with me whenever I walked down the street. I sill do. But, shitty as it is, it seems to have become a part of our beautiful American culture (said in a tone of sarcasm). Things completely got to be too much for me when I started my job. I didn't start until about 4 weeks ago. I quit last week. I was getting harassed by a group of about 7 men. I always wonder why I was picked to be the target. I just don't care anymore. Within a two week period I was asked if I was seeing anybody, "Can I walk you home?", things about the way I look, etc. All of it escalated into that they wanted to have sex with me, I was a "whore", and then one day everything was pushed far over the edge when I was in the worker's green room when one of my co-workers came up from behind me and grabbed my thigh. I got away from him and found out that he had shut both him and me in the room with another co-worker. I was able to get the door open and run out before they could catch me. Needless to say I was hurt but above all, I was pissed off. I wanted to hurt someone back. I was sick of being victimized. Luckily my roommate was home and I raged and released my frustration, pain, and utter disgust to her. A couple days later I quit my job and reported all of the men that were harassing me. Justice was served, but in how many other cases around the world are women being objectified, raped, beaten, cat-called, looked up and down, denied right of marriage to each other, denied abortion rights, having their clitoris mutilated, being told to "smile", followed, threatened, and flat out treated like a door mat and nothing is done. To those women who are out there that think that is just the way life is and always will be... NO! Stand up for yourself and don't be ashamed of your dignity. I apologize for ranting, but I must admit I feel



I think I was 18 years old one summer night when I had friends over- including you, B-, N- and whoever else. I was trying to be cool by having you guys over while my whole family was out of town. We got high and drunk and at some point I went to bed thinking everyone could sort-out sleeping arrangements themselves. I woke up when you knocked on my door asking for me. I figured we were out of beds & couches so you could sleep on mine because it was huge. That's what I said, "you can sleep here if you want". I wiggled to the far side of the bed and went back to sleep. Pretty soon, you started to touch me. I'd always had a crush on all of [my brother's] friends- including you- so I figured it would be ok if we spoon. (But I didn't say anything out loud.) You continued to touch me and I was no longer comfortable. You kept trying to roll me over to face you but I kept resisting. You reached between my legs, groping my body and chest and somehow reached your head around to kiss me. Next you got on top of me, straddled me, put your hands under my back to pull off my pajamas. I mumbled "No's" before but when you were going to pull out your dick, I said it loud enough at this point to break through your drunk, stoned haze. I pushed you off and then curled in the fetal position on the far side of the bed. You left my room. In the morning, I think you'd already left before I got downstairs. I don't think I saw you for at least a year after that and the conversation was minimal. Several years later (one of the winters [my brother] was in Africa), I came to Colorado for a work vacation, you helped me enormously by letting me stay at your house, borrow your jeep to drive to Aspen then stay at your house again to escape the horrible work vacation. You were very thoughtful and brotherly and I interpreted that as your regret. I know you're not a bad person, but you made a horrible mistake.

The morning after you molested me (after I finally got everyone to leave the house), I took a long shower because I felt so disgusting. I called my two best friends for consolement and eventually ran to one of their houses to cry. She had her own abuse story to compare so I was comforted that she understood, but I was angry that it is such a common occurrence for young women.

You were my first sexual experience. If someone asks about "my first kiss" or "first ____", I have to lie. I don't know what to call what you did. An assault? Was I molested? It wasn't date rape because I wasn't raped (luckily) but I knew you very well and I trusted you. I was drunk and I let you get in the bed, but you were also like my big brother. Since I didn't know what it was, I didn't know what to do with it. I just tucked it away and never told anyone else. But it reappeared to haunt me. A few guys I really trusted as friends couldn't date me because I was sexually repulsed. I couldn't get close to them even though I wanted to and that made me question my sexuality. Later I proved to myself that I was straight by hooking-up with guys I didn't know that well and who I felt superior to- intellectually, age or whatever. I did a lot of other painful "growing-up" in college, but the fact remains, I haven't had a successful relationship of any length because I'm avoiding men having any power over me. I'm un/consciously looking for it to fail or I put up barriers to prevent getting hurt. Your assault was the first of many, but you hurt me the deepest because you took advantage of my drunken sleeping state, you took advantage of my crush, you took advantage of the fact that my brother was gone, the house guests were asleep, and I had never been touched before.

I'm suffocating in a closet of skeletons and I needed to clear out this one. This conversation was supposed to be in person, but when I was in Colorado, we hung out one night and it was awkward to pull you aside. It has taken me forever to write this letter because this sucks J-, it really does. It fucking kills me to think about it every day and relive it by writing it down. You can call me if you want to reply, but I guarantee it will be weird because you'll catch me off guard. It might be easier to write your own letter because it's only fair you get to put your thoughts together too. I didn't tell my family about the incident because I was ashamed and scared about what would happen if our families found out. I thought that would be more stressful than burying the whole incident. Obviously that wasn't healthy and right now I just want an apology. I want you to learn something from this so you'll move on and be healthy without a social stigma. I hope to hear from you.

K.

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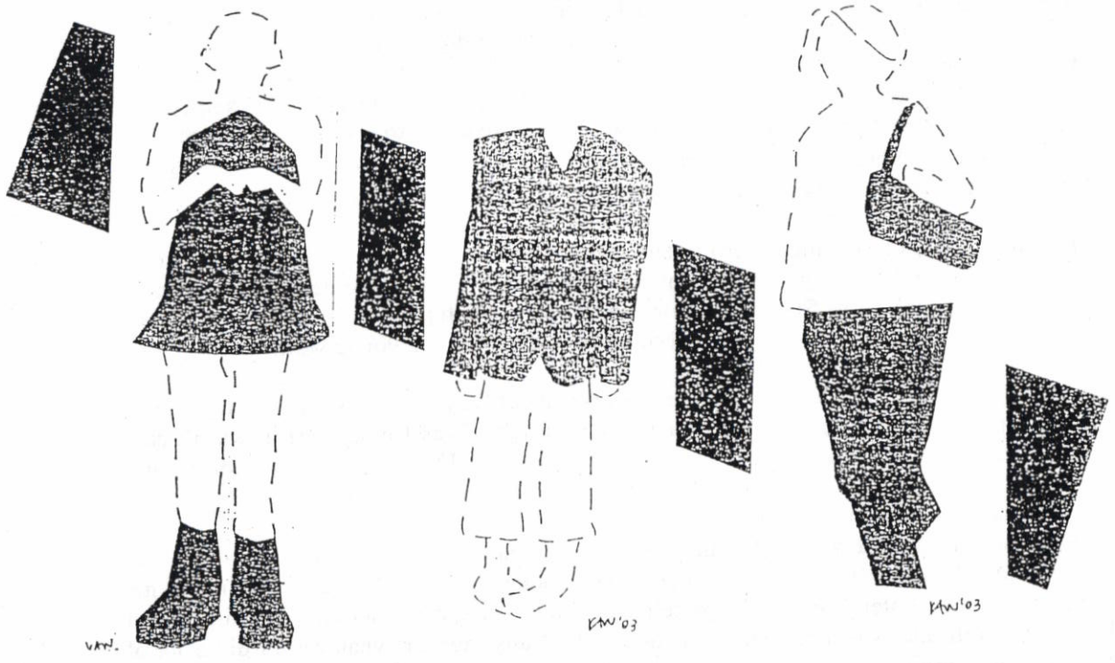


October 2, 2002

K-

I'm so sorry for what happened that night, I'm so sorry for how it has affected you, and most of all I'm sorry for taking advantage of all the positive innocent things that allowed such a think to even happen.

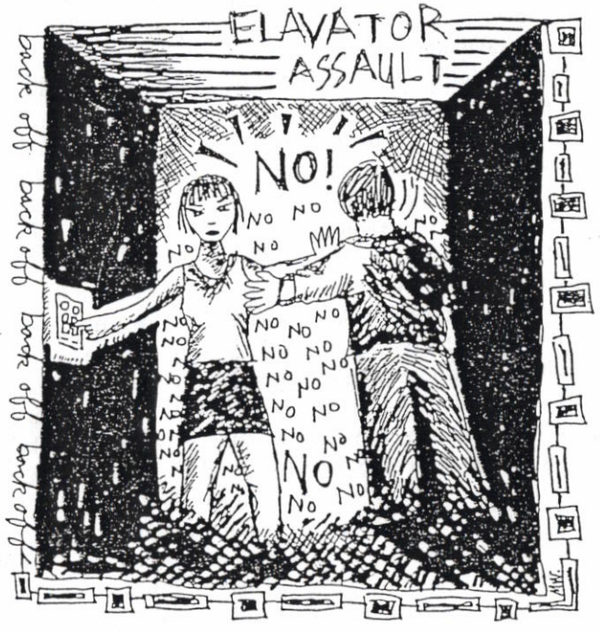
Big Mouth #1

By Redmoonsong

The first time happened when I was about 20 and wearing a sheer outfit. I got into an elevator and a man stepped in with me and as we rode up, he said "Do you always wear see thru clothes?"

"When I feel like it," I replied.

As I exited, he followed me to my car. I turned to him and said, "I'm gonna start counting, and by the time I get to three, you better be moving away from here. ONE!!" I shouted at the top of my lungs. "TWO!!" He started to back away, looking confused. "THREE!!" He was at the front of the car, so I unlocked the door, jumped in, closed and locked the door. He ran over and started pounding on the glass. I drove off and started shaking all over and couldn't stop 'til I got home.



Big Mouth #2

By Redmoonsong

I was 50 years old and hitchhiking in a truck. The man was my age and we were talking amiably. Suddenly, he reached over and touched my breast. I looked at him and said in a normal tone of voice, "Did I give you any indication that I wanted you to do that?" He said "No, but..." And I said, "DID I GIVE YOU ANY INDICATION THAT I WANTED YOU TO DO THAT CUZ MY LIFE OUT HERE DEPENDS ON ME GIVING VERY CLEAR SIGNALS!!!" (Said very loudly) He started apologizing and I said, "Shame on you! I now feel completely differently about you then I did before. Shame on you!"

- Practice yelling "NOOOOOO!" for a long time. See how it feels to yell for a whole minute! At first it may feel like a very long time. See how it feels to yell for more then a minute... for 3 or 4 minutes. This will be good practice in case you need to defend yourself for an extended period of time.
- Practice yelling different words and phrases so you can get a feel for what ones you are comfortable using, and what ones come naturally. [See What should I yell?]
- Imagine yourself in different situations where you would have to yell to defend yourself. Does your yell change if you are defending yourself:
  against a stranger versus someone you know?
  in a crowded area like a bar versus on an empty street at night?
  in your home or the home of a friend?
  Get to know your different yells.

What should I yell?

It's up to you! In a dangerous situation the actual words you use are secondary in importance. What really matters is the power of your voice. Having said this, there are some things to consider when choosing what to yell as you practice.

"NO!" is always a good thing to yell in a dangerous situation for several reasons. The word "NO" is little but it is powerful. It sends a very clear message. "NO" also carries legal ramifications. Should you decide to take your assailant/rapist to court having said "NO" will help your case.

As stated above, it is not guaranteed that your yelling will bring a third party to your aid, but you can increase the chances of intervention happening by making people feel directly involved. If you are assaulted in your home or in an area where you know people (friends, neighbors etc.) you can call out to those people by name. Using someone's name makes that person more likely to come to your aid, and it may make the assailant more hesitant. If you are in an area where there are people around who you do not know you can still make them feel personally invested in your situation by describing them and yelling specific commands such as, "You in the red shirt... Call the cops NOW!"

Likewise, and possibly more productive, you can yell specific commands at the assailant such as, "Take 5 steps back NOW!" "Get off of my bed NOW!" or "RUN!!" Many women have reported that the assailant actually followed their commands. This is not surprising when you consider that assailants are usually very nervous about the assault too. **Yelling a command gives you a great opportunity to change the power dynamic and take control of the situation.** Also, the more you yell a command the more likely the assailant is to follow it.

Remember...
Your yell is a powerful weapon that no one can take away from you.

)

Thank you to Meredith Stern for input on this article.

Reading your letter has left me questioning what type of person I am, was and will be. It disgusts me to think that I actually did something like that and have been allowing myself to forget about it for so long.

I recall initially wanting to apologize to you about it, but didn't probably because of how I deal with things. I have serious communication problems, at least that is what most of my semi significant others have told me. I think my communication problems stem more from my intense and daily self-medication. When I say how I deal with things, I mean I put them away and forget about them or allow myself to believe them different. So maybe I avoided a formal apology because I thought you did not want to be reminded about it, or I did not want to remind myself about it, probably a combination of the two.

Thinking about this has allowed me to revisit other bad things that have happened in my life and question how have they affected or changed me. For example, when I was very young I was looking at pornographic magazines with a friend and his older brother, the brother then forced me to such my friend's dick. This of course was a terrible experience, but I really can't say how it has affected me, accept I never want to suck dick again. I unfortunately got my girlfriend in high school pregnant, and as you know I do not have a child. This continues to affect me; I feel a constant sense of guilt as I do with what I did to you. I also feel I have let my parents down since they have talked to me many times with their concerns for abortion and their desire for me to have children of my own someday. So this has made my relationship strange with them since I always have the feeling "if they only know what I have done". That event has also made my relationships difficult because I never want to be in that situation again even thought I know I would handle it different. I have never told anyone about any of these things, I just thought I would tell you.

I have not had much success with relationships, but if I were to give you some advice this is what it would be. There is one girl that I truly loved and still miss today; she was one of my best friends for about two years before we started dating. Because we were good friends before we started dating it allowed us to be ourselves around each other, and avoid the use of a façade. This made our relationship real and I hope I can feel like that again but it doesn't seem possible, everyone now seems more concerned about not being lonely than really being happy. So I feel people rely heavily upon the façade to avoid this loneliness. For example, the girl I was just dating told me she was divorced after about a month of dating. Anyways what I'm trying to say is I'm sorry you push away people that you trust and know because of what I did, because my best relationship was with a true friend.

I can't tell you why I did what I did because I don't know. I do know I could only read your description of it once because it made me feel so awful. All I allowed myself to remember is that I tried to hug and kiss you. I have admitted to myself for some time now that I have true problems with drinking, sometimes it's good sometimes it's bad. I'm sure my problem will continue to cause grief for those I care about and for myself. I don't know when it will get better or when it will get worse. I know it is very difficult to do something about it or even to talk to someone about it.

I'm sure things will get better for you, you're too cute and smart for them not to. I guess the only thing good about forgetting about bad things is it allows you to focus on the good things. If you even want to talk you can call me at xxx or email me at xxx.

Take care,
J

****

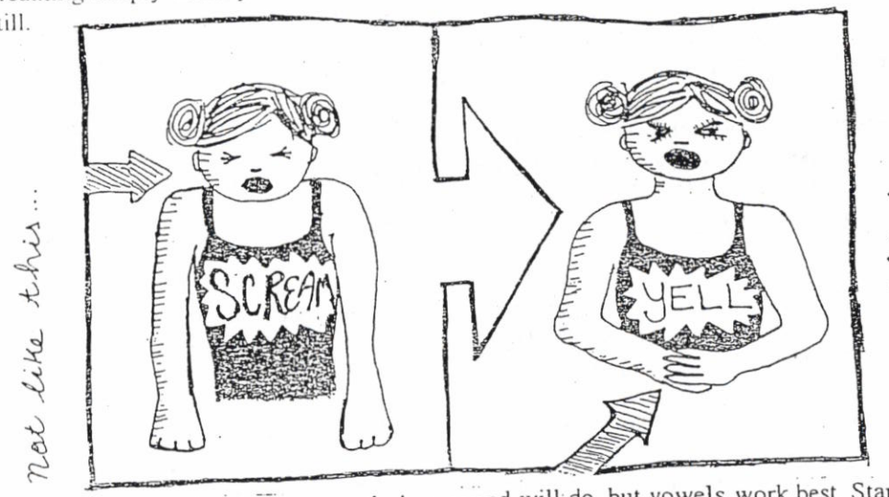
December 6, 2002
J-
Thank you for writing back to me so promptly- I am not so efficient.

I was not completely relieved to read your letter because I don't think you "got it". Your apology was sincere, but I'm not the person to receive your purge of emotional problems. I definitely was not soliciting relationship advice nor compliments on my looks & intelligence. I was describing an abuse of power and trust, which now I know happened to you also. Luckily I worked through my sexual identity issues but you haven't gotten over your homophobia and other hang-ups. I am not going to help you, and I hope you surround yourself with people who will. I am writing briefly just to let you know that you do need to make a formal apology to my brother and parents for what you did to me and how you've been lying to them. I wanted you to come up with this course of action yourself in order to redeem yourself in their eyes and relieve my stress holding this from them so long, but you haven't so here's my request for it.

I have been collaborating with a woman named Ariel who edits the (mini-magazine) The Women's Self Defense Zine. A large portion of the zine is articles by women who were strong defending themselves from attacks. We co-wrote a piece on how partners, friends, and family can help victims of sexual assault. A course of action for assault victims can be to address the perpetrator for closure and reparation. The method I devised with some help was to write you a letter. Ariel was inspired by my decision and requested I submit the letter anonymously. I will get you the zine when it is published and I hope you will have found some assistance with your issues before I see you at my brother's wedding.

Best,
K

- Place your hands on your lower belly and continue breathing deeply in and out. Keep your shoulders still... if they are rising and falling with your breath that means you are still breathing into your chest. You want to be breathing into your belly because when you start yelling this will help protect your throat from becoming sore. You know you are breathing deeply when your hands rise and fall with each breath but your shoulders are still.



- Now, as you exhale let out a sound. Any sound will do, but vowels work best. Start with "ooo000OOO" letting the sound grow louder as you exhale.
- Use your diaphragm muscle to push *all* of your breath out. When you think that you've gotten all of your breath out push *more* out by contracting your stomach and continue with your sound until your breath cuts off and you need to inhale again.
- Once you've pushed all the air out let your belly expand again to pull air in deep. It is normal to feel the muscles in your belly ach a little because they are being used in a new way. It's like any other exercise... it takes getting used to, and your diaphragm muscle will grow stronger the more you use it.
- Remember: Yelling is a lower, more "bass" sound then screaming. It may take you several tries to get a low, gutsy sound. It can help to remind yourself that a yell comes from your belly and not from your throat.
- Let yourself make louder and louder sounds with each exhale until you are yelling loud and long! Now you've got the feel for yelling!!!

GOOOOOOOOOOOO!

Practicing your yell:

- Practice yelling "NOOOOOOOOOO!" loud and long.
- Practice yelling "NO" over and over again. See how it feels to yell "NO" 5 times in a row... ten times... more.
- If you are practicing with a partner you can take turns yelling "NO" at each other. Each time your partner yells "NO" take one step back. Have your partner keep doing this until you have backed up against the wall. Then switch roles.

yell you are breaking the attacker's "script" and taking the power and control back into your own hands. In addition to being an unexpected deviation from the plan, the sheer volume and power of your yell will startle the assailant.

What else can yelling do if I am in a dangerous situation?

Yelling may make other people in the area aware of what is going on. There is always the possibility that someone may hear you yelling and come to your aid either by direct intervention or by calling the police. While it would be great for this to happen we should not count on it. People are usually more concerned with their own safety then the safety of others. However, yelling will definitely bring attention to your situation and this is not what the assailant wants. Your yell is like a bright light shining on the assailant, and it will cause him or her to become very uncomfortable about carrying out the (rest of the) assault.

Ready...!

Especially if you've never yelled before... give it a go! Yelling can actually be fun! It is a wonderful and empowering experience to practice yelling with a group of people in a self-defense class. This will give you a chance to hear how strong and unique everyone's voice is. But, if there are no self-defense classes in your area don't let that deter you. You could always get a group of your friends together to practice yelling... or even do it by yourself. Practicing yelling, like practicing any other self-defense technique (or anything else!), is very important. You don't want to wait till you're in a dangerous situation to try out your yell. Practice it now so you can get comfortable using your voice in this new way.

Get set!

Warming up for your yell:

- Find a safe place away from others where you won't be disturbed, or just let folks around you know that you are going to be making a lot of noise.
- Once you're in your space stand up and start breathing *deeply* in and out through your mouth. You'll feel the air filling up your lungs. When your lungs expand your diaphragm muscle will pull down making more room for your lungs. Your belly will fill with air and then your ribcage will rise.
- You want to breath deeply, bringing the air into the bottom of your lungs. Don't breath into your chest but deeper into your belly—your power. This will make your yell louder, stronger, and longer.

Dear friends and partners:
(By Kim and Ariel)

It can be challenging to give support to a survivor of violence. A lot of times friends may not know "how to act" or "what to say" and unfortunately just end up avoiding the subject all together. That is mostly what happened in our cases, and it made Ariel feel really isolated, like she was stuck all alone with this horrible experience. And it made Kim feel like she was partly to blame for the incident and irrational for being scared and sad. This kind of isolation is an experience that other types of survivors feel. For instance, some cancer patients stop hearing from friends who feel helpless and scared of death issues.

Ariel: For a long time, I felt like I didn't have anyone to talk with, or any constructive ways to deal with all of the anger and fear that I felt after the assault. I actually ended up cutting myself; something I had never done before. I believe I resorted to this because I felt so isolated, angry, frustrated, and scared from the whole assault and the lack of support, and needed some way to "release" those emotions.
Kim: I didn't actually tell anyone about my first assault so I denied myself support. Much later, after an attempted sexual assault, friends and lovers did not know how to help so I choose to see a therapist.

If you are in a position to support a survivor of violence, there is **no one-way** to act...just be yourself. As a supporter, you don't have to make them "feel better", just be a friend. The healing process is not going to fit some after-school special "3-phase" model. Healing processes are as unique as the person because the event comes in context with a unique set of life experiences.

The following are some actions we wish people had done (or not done!) to be supportive in the early stages of our healing processes after the assaults, and some of them are things that friends did do that really helped. We are talking about our own personal experiences and needs, and we're not implying that every survivor will want the same things we did.

- **Provide a safe space.** I wanted there to be time for me to talk about the assault in a place where I felt safe, unrushed, and undistracted.
- **When I talk about the assault, believe me.**
- **Let me express the full range of my emotions** about the assault: rage, sadness, fear etc. Let me be angry and you can be angry with me.
- **Let me use the terms that I feel are most appropriate when describing the assault.** For example, let me use the word "rape" to describe the severity of an assault even if there wasn't "vaginal penetration".
- **Let me define what about the assault was most hurtful; Do not assume that one aspect of the assault was "worse" then another.** This includes not saying stuff like "That's horrible!" when I talk about what specifically happened. What you may think was horrible may not have been a big deal to me. Or something that you didn't think was "that bad" could have been what hurt me most. Let me decide that.
- **Don't "down play" the assault.** For example, I overheard one friend who I'd confided in saying "He messed with her pretty bad". I was not "messed with" I was assaulted! Let me define what happened in my own terms. Let me name the behavior.
- **Be patient.** Don't ask me to provide details I don't feel comfortable/ready to talk about.
- **Place blame where it belongs: on the assailant.** Don't ask me questions like "Why were you there/in that situation?" or "Were you drinking?" or "Didn't you know that was dangerous?" These types of questions imply that I was somehow responsible for the assault. And besides, why I was where I was is not the issue. Negate my feelings of guilt- that I had any responsibility for the situation happening.
- **Don't dwell on my feelings of fear**, but be considerate of situations that would be scary- walking home through a dark neighborhood at night, getting into a dark house at night, going back to the place where the assault occurred for any reason. Offer to accompany me just because I'd like the company, not because you're protecting me.
- **Focus on the positive.** Help me to realize all that I did to keep myself safe, sane, and together in the situation, and all that I did to get away/end the assault instead of focusing on what the assailant did to me.
- **Let me know I've got your steady, active support.** If you're up for being a support person make it clear that I can come to you again in the future for support. Follow this up by creating a safe space where I can bring up the issue if I want to. For example, a party or show is probably not a "safe space". Instead, we could make plans to go to a quiet café.
- **Allow me to take the time I need to heal-- don't rush me.** Healing comes in cycles and I may feel just fine for a while and then feel not so good again later. Allow me that flexibility, and don't think I should be "over it already".
- **Allow me to be alone if I need it.**
- **Let me talk about my dreams.** I've found that even years later I'll have dreams about the assault which leave me with intense/painful emotions, and it really helps if I can talk it over with someone. As a supporter, you could talk about how the survivor could

Loud and Clear: Have you yelled recently?

By Ariel

"80% of women who yell and run from their assailants escape the assault."

Yelling is a basic, easy to use, and very effective self-defense technique. A loud powerful yell can do many things to help overcome a threatening situation. This section is designed to give a basic understanding of yelling and help you become comfortable using your yell. Personally, I think that the best way to get comfortable using your yell is to take a self-defense class. In a class setting you'll be able to hear how unique and strong each person's voice is, and also get tips on improving the strength of you own yell. So, this section is not meant to substitute for taking a class.

Is yelling like screaming?

Nope, yelling is different from screaming. A scream comes from your throat. It is high pitched and unsustainable. A scream is what you might hear in an Alfred Hitchcock movie. It can easily be interpreted as a fearful, helpless sound, and it can also hurt your throat if you scream for a long time. A yell is a world of difference.

So what is a yell?

A yell is a low, loud, powerful sound that comes from your belly. Because it comes from your gut it won't hurt your throat like a scream can so you can yell for a looooooong time if you need to. A yell communicates power and authority. A yell says, "Don't mess with me!" or "Stop messing with me!" It is a powerful and effective self-defense technique.

What can yelling do for me?

If we find ourselves in a dangerous situation yelling can help us regain control of that situation. Sometimes fear can cause people to "freeze up" and yelling breaks that freeze. It keeps us breathing, thinking, and focused on getting ourselves to safety. Yelling also releases adrenaline into our blood stream which will help us to react quickly and powerfully. Defenders have reported being able to accomplish amazing feats with the help of adrenaline. Yelling will also help us transform our fear into power which we can use to strengthen all of our other self-defense techniques. For example, a defensive strike to our assailant's knee, throat, or eyes will be stronger and more effective if we back it up with a powerful yell.

What will yelling do to an assailant?

Assailants look for "easy victims", not someone who they think can powerfully resist. A yell tells an assailant that you are NOT an "easy victim". **When we yell we let the assailant know that we have a strong spirit, that we have chosen to resist with all of our might, and that we will succeed.** In many cases the clear message that your strong yell sends will be enough to end the assault.

Assailants attack people because they want to gain a feeling of power and control over another person. Most assailants have thought about how they want the attack to go. They have it planned out in their head. This plan is like a "script" which the assailant expects you to follow. When you

FIGHTING BACK

Self Defence for Women & Girls

⇒ 64

*ISY

I ONCE MADE A BOOKLET ON SELF-DEFENCE FOR 9. BUT I WANTED TO RE-DO IT. SO HERE GOES! "SELF DEFENCE IS WHAT WE DO TO MAKE OUR LIVES SAFER ON A DAILY BASIS." IT'S TAKING CONTROL OF SITUATIONS IN WHICH YOU'RE TO BE MADE A VICTIM – THIS RANGES FROM COMMENTS TO PHYSICAL ATTACK. IT'S REALISING THAT IF SOMEONE DOES NOT RESPECT YOUR BOUNDARIES, YOU SHOULD STOP THEM. THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT STRATEGIES FOR THIS – SAYING SOMETHING, YELLING, LEAVING, FIGHTING – THE IMPORTANT THING IS YOU DO SOMETHING!

BODY LANGUAGE

STARING AT THE GROUND, HUNCHED SHOULDERS, HIDING YOUR HANDS IN YOUR POCKETS, MAKING YOURSELF SMALL, CARRIES THE MESSAGE "I'M WEAK & VULNERABLE!" WOMEN GET TARGETED AS EASY PREY, SO HAVING STRONG BODY LANGUAGE DECREASES OUR RISK OF BEING FUCKED AROUND. MAKE EYE CONTACT WITH PEOPLE IN A WAY THAT LETS THEM KNOW YOU'VE SEEN THEM. SWING YOUR ARMS WHEN WALKING, TAKE UP SPACE. STRONG BODY LANGUAGE NOT ONLY AFFECTS HOW OTHERS SEE US, IT INCREASES OUR OWN CONFIDENCE.

VERBAL STRATEGIES

ASSERTING YOURSELF IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF TAKING CONTROL OF YOUR LIFE. IF SOME BEHAVIOUR IS MAKING YOU FEEL BAD, UNCOMFORTABLE, SCARED, CONFRONT THE PERSON. YOU CAN

1. NAME THE BEHAVIOUR
2. CRITICISE IT
3. TELL THEM WHAT YOU WANT THEM TO DO

"YOU'RE CONSTANTLY TOUCHING ME. I DON'T LIKE IT. STOP IT." REPEAT IF NEEDED!

THIS IS A DIRECT, NON-ENGAGING WAY OF ESTABLISHING WHAT YOU WANT. AVOID SAYING "PLEASE" ETC WHEN ASSERTING YOURSELF

IF SOMEONE IS BOTHERING YOU IN A PUBLIC PLACE, MAKE A SCENE! IT WILL BE MUCH MORE EMBARASSING FOR THAT PERSON THAN FOR YOU!

OUR VOICE IS A WEAPON, TOO. YELLING ALERTS OTHER PEOPLE & CAN FREAK AN ATTACKER OUT. IT CAN ALSO HELP CHANNEL YOUR FEAR INTO AGGRESSION! SHOUT 'NO!' OR 'FUCK OFF!' LOUDLY, DEEPLY FROM YOUR STOMACH.

REMEMBER, IF YOUR GUT FEELING TELLS YOU SOMETHING DODGY'S GOING ON – SAY SOMEONE UNPLEASANT IS FOLLOWING YOU – TRUST IT AND DO SOMETHING, WHETHER IT'S CONFRONTING THE PERSON, GETTING TO SAFETY, CALLING SOMEONE OR GETTING A WEAPON READY.

GETTING RIGHT IN TO SOMEONES FACE & SCREAMING WILL THROW THEM.

(to be continued ...)

* ISY runs "morgenmuffel mailorder" Katch0063@yahoo.co.uk

overcome the situation in the dream. (Note to survivors: I've found it very empowering to visualize myself being successful after dreams where I was in an unsafe situation.)

- **Work towards some resolvement.** Focus on whatever will make me feel better. Offer your support to create closure. There could be many ways to go about this: advice to quit a job that is stressful and unsafe, intimidate a sexual harassment offender, take legal action, or write a letter to the offender.
- **Offer to help me find resources** that will help me deal with the assault such as feminist counseling, support groups, books, web sites or other informational resources, a self-defense class etc. But please let me be the one to initiate what resources I actually use. (i.e. Don't tell me what I should do)
- **Offer your support if and when I want to confront the assailant, but don't initiate this!** One friend wanted me to go to the spot of the assault the next day to see if we could find the guy and confront him. Another friend wanted to do a "ceremony" in that spot. I did not feel safe going back there that soon (5 years later I still don't want to go back there!) and was not in any state of mind to do a confrontation/ceremony then.
- **Don't confront the assailant without my permission!**
- **Don't talk to others** about what I tell you without my permission. Please respect my privacy unless you're talking to a counselor about how my situation affected you, or in order to get advice from them on how to be a supportive friend.

Partner(s)~

- **Let me be the one to initiate physical contact for a while.**
- **Be very responsive to my nonverbal cues.** If you feel me tense up or pull away, STOP and let me figure out what I'm feeling/what I want.
- **Be patient.** Being patient applies to so many situations and interactions. Ask for clarification if you don't understand my actions. Remember that you are the focus of most of my thoughts and emotions and you are the most important support to me.

Family ~

- **Don't be offended.** I might give you a more delicate version of the story. I will be able to tell you what happened depending on the type of support I think you will be able to provide. I might lay the burden of truth on friends and partners because they usually provide my emotional support.
- **Dig out your skeletons.** Letting me know something like this happened to you or a family member helps you relate, can bring the family closer, and destroys the isolation that I, the survivor, feel when I think I'm the only one who's been through this.
- **Spend time together.** Even if we're not talking about the incident, just making family connections reinforces the fact that I have a support network no matter what happens.
- **Establish a rapport.** Talk about life issues from the start so that if something serious happens, the survivor will already be comfortable to seek you for support →

A Brief list of Resources for Survivors...to start...

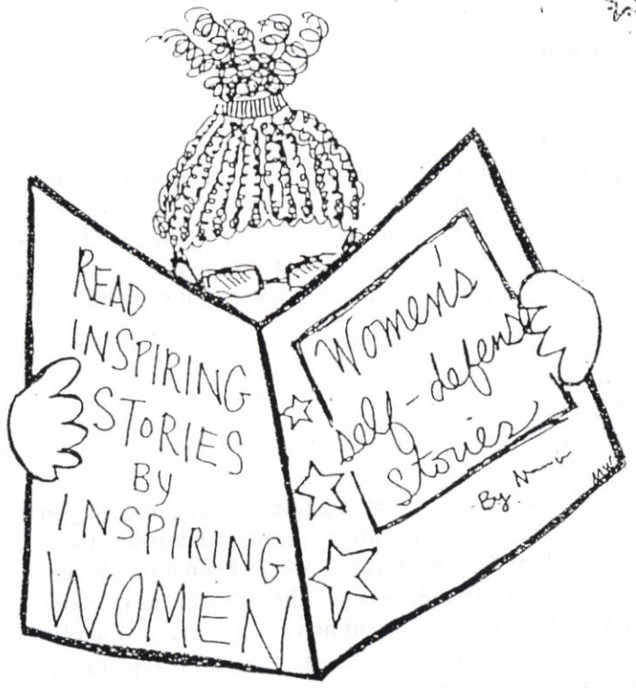
For People Struggling With Self Injury
Books:
Women Living with Self Injury by Jane Wegscheider Hyman
Bright Red Scream by Marilee Strong

Web sites:
Self Injury, Abuse & Trauma Resource Directory
http://www.self-injury-abuse-trauma-directory.info

http://www.selfinjury.freeserve.co.uk

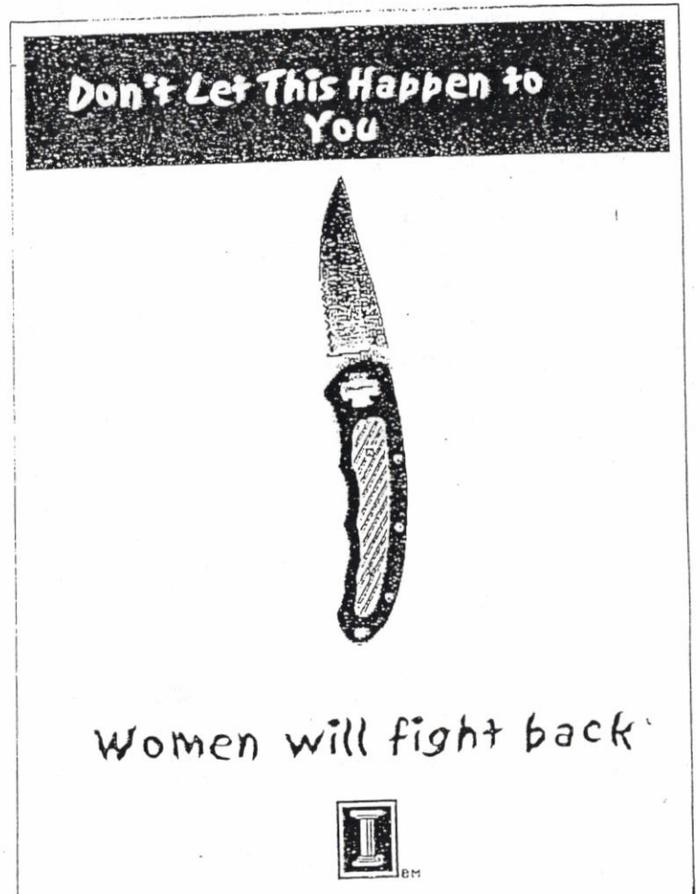
For Male Survivors of Sexual Assault
http://www.utexas.edu/student/cmhc/booklets/maleassault/menassault.html

See also the **Resources** section at the end of the zine.



Day it with ... POSTER ART!

This year there was a whole string of assaults (more then 2 dozen) against women on the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana camps where I go to school. The assaults seemed to be perpetrated by the same one or two offenders because they followed a similar pattern of a man with a gun, and they happened in one area. The University responded by sending out emails and posting fliers that stated "DON'T BECOME A VICTIM". Yeah right... like it's a choice! These bogus fliers announced "If you walk alone after dark, you are at risk for becoming the latest victim in a string of attacks..." the fliers went on to tell women what they should do like "NEVER walk alone after dark." The fliers placed attention/blame on women for taking "risks" while totally diverting blame from the perpetrator(s). I am sick of being told that I can't walk by myself, can't go out at night, etc. That is bullshit. Why wasn't responsibility being placed on the assailants? I kept thinking that there should be some kind of response to these stupid fliers but never got my shit together to do anything about them. Then one day I saw this poster up all over campus! It was designed by my friend Molly. I love it because it places responsibility back onto the perpetrators, and encourages women to fight back. Now I'm totally into poster art so... Send me your poster art for issue #3!



occurred in our activist community were looked at together it was a very big problem. We arranged a meeting with another activist group Tito that was heavily involved with and who had voiced concerns about his behavior towards women as well. Two members from each of our groups came together along with me and another woman who wanted to confront Tito. When we confronted him with each instance of inappropriate conduct and how it had damaged the trust that activists had to have with one another to accomplish anything, he just stared at us blankly. He was completely unresponsive. Eventually, exasperated, we asked him if the intervention had changed his thinking about his behavior. He thought for a moment and said "not really." We asked him if ASU had laid out behavior guidelines before these incidents had happened would his behavior have been the same? He thought for a while and sincerely said, "no, probably not." We called the meeting to a close and left very disappointed. All we could say was "at least we gave it a shot."

Six months later, out of the blue I received an email from Tito. It was an apology for his behavior. He said that he had taken this time to rethink a lot of things in his life and realized how much he could have hurt all of those women with his behavior. I was surprised with the sincerity with which he had written. He had even included a reflective poem that he had written about the two incidents with women in ASU about how he wished to make up for the untrusting environment his behavior created. And to top it off, he said that he had written an educational play about sexual assault and police brutality that he was putting on with a theatre group he was part of to try to help curb the damage he had done. He even asked my friend and I to read it and give criticism so that our perspectives would be included.

I know not every instance of confronting a perpetrator is a success. This one happened to be a kind of a retroactive success. In a way, even if Tito hadn't changed his ways, I know that because confronting him was what I needed to do (and because I was able to do it in a safe way) even that would have provided some closure and given me the feeling that I did what I could to defend myself and my activist community.

Rebecca is the owner of the one woman wonder Vegan Desserts By Rebecca. *Check out her website at* http://www.vegan-desserts.com *yum, yum, yum!* See add page 63

By Lisa Garrett

I wrote [this] in my journal twelve years ago. It was my perspective at 23 (as I indicated with the date). I honor that as a really true place for me at the time. Yes, as you can see from the journal entry, I did blame myself to some extent. In reading it now, I sob with such compassion for myself and anger for the society/family that taught me to think that way. So, the best I can say is that as "inappropriate" as it is to think that way, it was true for me at the time and I think many girls/womyn also unconsciously believe they are to blame. It was my attempt to name my truth now, 12 years later in the follow-up entry, as a way to offer a continued piece of my process around the event. It feels important to me to honor all of me...my entire process as a survivor, not just the Amazon self who knows a more empowered truth now. For me, it was important to be true to both who I was at the time and who I am now. I claim all of me.

June 23, 1990
Journal kept during travels in Europe
(I was 23 at the time and just graduated from college)

Day spent walking through Lucerne. Lesson: Don't go in isolated areas alone.

I walked around the ancient walls that once fortressed the city and found a bell tower that I wanted to climb up. It was here I encountered a man who molested me. No, I wasn't physically hurt, but emotionally I was accosted. (I don't know the right words to use to describe what happened exactly). Anyway I climbed up the clock tower to see how the time was kept. Old folks two towers over said it was worth the steep climb up. As I approached the tower there was a middle-aged man ("normal looking") admiring the view. I stopped a ways back from him and looked with my camera: bad picture, so I put it back in my pack. I read the map of the towers and realized this one was the one with the clock at the top. As I entered, some tourists exited and I hesitated a little about the emptiness of the staircase. But I kept going, determined not to be paranoid.

Climbing the steps, I was scared mostly of the steepness and thought little of the one-way trap I was walking into. To the top, not much of a view and certainly not much insight as to how the time was kept. I studied the concrete block pendulum in the corner that ticked off notches on a wheel. I think each notch was a second or so.

Suddenly, I felt trapped up there and wanted to return down, but was almost afraid of what might be there. Too late. He was at the top of the stairs, so I tried to be calm and leave. He blocked the stairway and said, "Are you happy?" I smiled slightly and muttered, "Yes". Tried to get by but he and his dick in his hand blocked the way. I wanted to slip past but was so afraid. He speaks more in broken English: "Will you make me happy? Help me, please, please, help me, please help me." I respond, "Let me down." He responds right back leaning toward me, "Please help me...."

I felt the glass water bottle in my right hand. My voice sounded pleading and terrified: "Let me down?..." My head was racing: where the fuck can I go?? I am here trapped, ok now what? Don't run back he will really corner you and you can't run down those steep stairs. He knows you are scared, but he's sorta scared too, uneasy about handling his dick and pleading too for your "help". Gripping my glass bottle tighter, I instinctively lifted it over my shoulder and snarled my rage back: "I will push you down those stairs. Get the fuck out of my way."

"Okay." He descends and I follow lagging behind still holding the bottle over my shoulder poised.

At the bottom of the stairs, he walks off quickly. I want to cuss him out. Stay calm, stop shaking, it's ok, bastard, bastard, bastard. Find a phone.

Found a public phone station but I have to wait for an available booth. I want to vomit and cry. My entire body is shaking, really shaking!! I wanted to de-sex myself, make no man look at me. Ugly-fy myself. I am surrounded by men as I wait. It was sickly ironic. I couldn't stand or sit next to even one of them. I had to keep my eye on the receptionist who was female. Make sure she seems me and I see her. Make no eye contact with those men. Give them no opportunity to sex you again.

God,I am angry about this. I feel violated and helpless. And I felt guilty like I had set myself up by noticing him and knowingly going into a one-way trap. It wasn't a safe thing to do and I know better, but I certainly did not ask for it!! Bastard. That's the only word that fits.

July 1, 1990 (my 23 year-old reflections on being female)

It's strange to be a woman. I want to be attractive to men and have them notice me but there's such a fine line between wanting them to notice verses wanting certain ones to act. I did want that guy to notice me outside the tower, but I definitely didn't entice him or lead him on in any way. There's something intriguing about being admired, but I don't feel being admired and being accosted are at all related. He violated me emotionally and it's those scares that will make me less desirous of strange men's admiration. My idealism really fights with me----there's always the possibility, it says, that I might meet someone really nice and interesting in remote places. Then there's the practical side that remembers and keeps feeling the terror I felt in the tower, trapped.

I am glad to know that I can be threatening when I am cornered. I always wondered because I am so peaceful of a person. I know I would have hit him with that bottle if I had to. I am going to take a self-defense class this summer, no doubt!

Community Self-Defense
By Rebecca

For lack of a better term I'll call what happened self-defense infused with community-defense. When I was a first year student at DePaul University I began to get very involved in social justice activism. One of the groups that I was the most involved in was DePaul's Activist Student Union (ASU). The campaign that they were working on when I joined was a campaign in an attempt to change the sweatshop conditions that the university's merchandise (sweatshirts, hats, etc.) were made under. I was thrilled to be part of this group and threw my energies into the biggest event of the campaign: a "sleep-out" (as opposed to sit-in) in front of DePaul's school of business and administrative offices, right in the heart of downtown Chicago. For 10 days we advocated for the Worker's Rights Consortium (an independent sweatshop monitoring group that helps change unfair working conditions) while the school's administration decided whether or not to sign on. For those days I was part of a core group of about twelve people who handed out flyers in the morning, drummed and chanted in the evening and slept on the concrete at night. Most everyone new each other well from school and when someone who wasn't part of ASU showed up for the night, they were usually friends with someone there. It was a very safe feeling environment.

By night eight the core group had become very close friends and each night we would all crash in our sleeping bags snugly together in a group. However, the morning of day nine I awoke to a heavy weight on top of me pinning me down. I opened my eyes a to find one of the men in the group, Tito, on top of me. He didn't grab me or hurt me, but his move was very deliberate and not an accidental shift during sleep. After 10 seconds of frantic thinking of how to get his body off of mine I pushed him off of me and ran into the business school making a b-line for the bathroom. Inside I cried in one of the stalls. Something inside told me that Tito's move was more than just an accident; it really shook me up. I pulled myself together by trying to assure myself that it wasn't a big deal and I would just go back out and tell him to stay away from me. When I got back outside I saw him wide-awake and chatting with some other campers. I marched up to him and very loudly, clearly and firmly said "DON'T YOU EVER TRY ANYTHING LIKE THAT AGAIN." He gave no response and just stared at me like I was a space alien. I turned away trembling, gathered my sleeping bag and left.

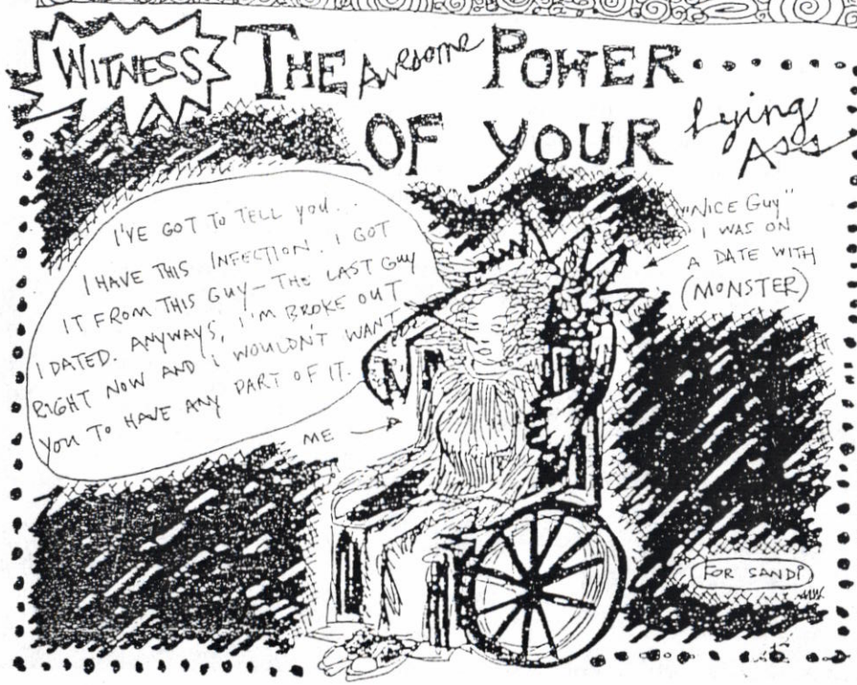
The next week, much to the group's excitement, we found that because of our efforts the University sided with us on worker's rights issues. Even though I was thrilled, something was still bothering me about the incident with Tito. It really shook the trust and comfort I had felt around my friends in ASU. I mentioned all this to a female friend of mine and she confided in me that Tito had groped her one of the nights at the sleep-out. The two of us decided that we should bring this issue to the entire group and possibly do some type of an intervention with Tito. I was initially worried that I would be seen as overly sensitive and silly for bringing such a little thing up—but the group was very concerned to hear what had happened. As we talked, other incidents came up where Tito had behaved inappropriately towards other women at activist events. While the incident with me seemed small, when all of the collective incidents that had

March Against Domestic Violence
Neighborhood Response by Survivors of Abuse and their Supporters

By Megan

There are two support groups for women survivors of domestic abuse in the community center where I work. One group is for English speakers and the other is for Spanish speakers. The groups meet weekly to talk and support one another as well as to discuss healthy relationships and how to create an action plan to get themselves and their children out of the house and away from the abuser. One activity which is always really powerful for all the members of the group is the T-shirt project.* Each woman designs a T-shirt to express herself. Some choose slogans like "No more violence in the home, no more violence in our community" and others represent their own story through pictures and words.

In October, the national month against Domestic Violence, the women organized a neighborhood march. I had the opportunity to join the march the past couple years and all we have all found it an empowering and powerful way to reclaim our voices. We walked along major streets in the Rogers Park neighborhood of Chicago where the participants worked and lived shouting slogans, holding bilingual signs and wearing purple, the color of Domestic Violence awareness. We handed out bilingual leaflets saying that we do not accept violence against women and children in our communities. We wore the T-shirts we designed. It was a great opportunity to make a visible presence in the neighborhood. This was not a large-scale protest down town, but a neighborhood-based action that spoke directly to the community. We all returned to the center energized and shared more ideas and strategies for awareness as we ate soup to warm us up after our march. □



*THE T-SHIRT PROJECT a.k.a. "THE CLOTHESLINE PROJECT" educates the public about the extent, prevalance, & impact of violence against women. It is a safe way for women to speak out against abuse. It bears witness to their personal experiences + celebrates their transition from victim to survivor.
find out more at: www.womenintransitioninc.org

December 25, 2002

I am 35 years old and still worth defending. I have the right to go anywhere I choose, wear anything I choose and say anything I desire. However, rights and safety are two different things. I am learning to discern safety and still speak out about the injustices in this misogynistic culture as much as I can. How many girls, young womyn and womyn think they are to blame for their perpetrator's violations??? How many of us fantasize about being "swept off our feet" by a stranger in a remote location? Where do these fantasies come from? Take a look around us.....MTV, lyrics to songs, magazines, romance novels, billboards, commercials.....we are saturated by this set up of our own demise.. As a teacher and feminist I continue to notice and speak out when I see this set up in action and encourage my sisters to open their eyes and mouths, as well. Violation is never our fault. And, we are so worth defending.
Blessed Be.

Anyway, almost three months had passed. I thought I was losing my mind, my self-esteem was so gone, and I was overwhelmed with childcare, housework, and isolation, as, surprise, surprise, C. hated my hanging out with any friends. I had none for a while. One evening, while frantically trying to make dinner Remi was unusually clingy, (but they get that way when they know you're stressed, and R and I had a really tight bond, as we nursed and he was constantly held by me, so whatever energy I had going on, he was totally exposed to it, for better or for worse) and I lost it, and started yelling, "What do you want?!" His little face twisted up in horror in response to my shrieking. Silence. Long pregnant pause- then WAAAAAAGH! Great—now I felt really miserable. I will never forget me hunkering down in the small space between the mattresses and the nightstand, frantically undoing his snowsuit, and just holding him, both of us crying, until we were both so exhausted. I wanted to die, but who'd raise Remi? The fact that I, who was generally so free-spirited with such an irreverent sense of humor, was having frequent detailed thoughts about my own death scared me. Plus I was tired all the time. I did a pregnancy test- it confirmed what I knew instantly that night, but had tried to ignore. I knew exactly when the last time I had sex was; I had less then a week to terminate. Later I would attempt to explain to C. why I wanted to terminate the pregnancy and he'd just stare ahead. Silence. Granted, my reason was that I didn't want the marriage to continue, so why bring another human into this? I never could call what happened that night what it was, rape, until winter of 2000, so I never did say to him, YOU DID THIS until we were in counseling, negotiating the terms of our separation.

I carried the pregnancy to term, with a mixture of hatred for this Obstacle to MY Escape and an intense impatience to meet this person that I was incubating. I knew she was female- while I can't say why, I just felt it. La Rapina was dawn quickly, in the ninth month of gestation. Opal Raven was born on October 12 of 1998. She is intense, observant and profoundly keen at naming her feelings. Quite the comedienne and sometimes overbearing, she forces me to reckon with emotions that I have painstakingly buried. It has been a long and complex three years but I have learned so much. She and I are determined that she make it to adult womanhood with the ability to expect that her boundaries be respected, and name any infractions for what they are, and hold the person(s) accountable. I intend to support her wholeheartedly. I have healed much through naming what I have survived and having my story acknowledged, and hearing/reading truths that tell me I am not alone.

It is 2002. I am now 27. I look in the mirror, and can honestly admire *the ovarios* on me. I know I still don't give myself all the credit I deserve, but it's coming. I am one awesome strong woman.

And wait 'til you meet my kids...

Johanna is a freelance artist see her add on page 63.

to leave an abusive jerk, and second for my adventures in NYC and SF. My mother was never much help; she would chime in with a disheartened, "I don't know why you did what you did, now how are you going to look in court?" She'd get angry at the fact that I refused to feel the shame that people were trying to force-feed me. To make a long gross story short I remember him pinning me to the bed while his foul alcohol-laden breath rushed over my face with each word: "Why? Why don't you want to? Because you're thinking of him, aren't you? No? Then prove it." Then silence while he did his thing. I just wanted it over with, I knew he'd pass out soon after. I hated how combative he was when drunk—I'd already experienced several fights with him, and just wasn't up to it. He ejaculated (very quickly for him; he normally takes forever—the feeling of power over must have been an intense turn-on) and as I had predicted, passed out immediately after. I stayed up, crying, and hating him, hoping this stupid marriage would be over, wracking my brain with a way to get out and not end up poverty-stricken with no stability for myself or my then nine-month old son. A somewhat bitter smirk is all I can muster when I think that I was ever actually afraid of his threats, that his silent treatments, and sulking ever affected me the way they did. But that's the kind of treatment I had grown up with, so I was quite used to feeling guilt and fear in response to another's anger over their own shortcomings.

The "him" he referred to was a boy that I worked with, who'd developed a kind of "savior" crush on me. We were actually only friends, or confidants rather, as fiends return the kindness, and in retrospect I never did anything as thoughtful for him in return. But then again, he never demanded it. Last year I wrote him a letter thanking him for the kindness he'd shown me. I bumped into him in line at the bank shortly after; as usual he was joking around with my children. I turned to see who was making my daughter laugh so hard and there was his big boyish grin: "I got your letter. Thank you. I'm glad you're moving on." Nothing physical had ever happened as we both were all too aware of the fact that I was married, albeit quite unhappily. But in the winter he'd pick me up for work. He drove my son and I to the doctor when we both had the flu and a wicked fever that had knocked me on my ass. He'd call to offer to pick up groceries for me whenever it was freezing, and would get down on all fours and play with Remi while I put them away or caught up on housework—something Remi's "dad" never did due to the fact that he was grappling with his own demons, or too affected by his attempts to numb them. He wanted to squander his little trust fund on me and get me out of this marriage and play daddy to my son. He was 21, and just seemed so naïve, so young, and I already had full hands with a real infant, and an overgrown yet incomplete human. I knew I'd eventually leave this person but I didn't want it to be for someone else. The only reason C. had known of this boy's crush on me was he used to obsessively check through my purses, or go looking in my wallet for cash. He'd found a note that this boy had written- it was nothing but a flowery doodling of my name, but in those days I grasped whatever cheesy form happiness took, and savored it. C. also used to go through my journals, and while I wasn't dumb enough to write about this person, when he was drunk he'd hurl back stuff I had written, telling me that "normal people" didn't have thoughts like mine, didn't make the analogies I made.

FUCK STREET HARASSMENT!

JUST ANOTHER DAY . . .
IN A WOMYN'S LIFE

"HEY BABY, WHAT'S YOUR NAME?" Why do you wanna know?

"DO YOU WANNA COME HOME WITH ME TONIGHT?" Leave me the fuck alone!

"WHERE ARE YOU GOING?" None of your fucking business!

"YOU HAVE A NICE ASS." Fuck off! Fuck you!

WE NEED TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY, STOP TREATING OUR SISTERS LIKE BULLSHIT!
CALL PEOPLE OUT, EVEN IF THEY'RE YOUR BOYS.
DON'T GO ALONG WITH THIS SEXIST BULLSHIT!
SUPPORT HARASSED WOMYN! SUPPORT YOURSELF! YOU'RE NOT ALONE

FUCK STREET HARASSMENT!

What makes you think you can treat me this way? objectifying womyn + thinking it's ok. Catch me in a bad mood you'll feel my anger RISE. i still exist though i've got this between my thighs. sexist behavior in the public realm — fear, intimidation, intrusion over-whelm. I know my capabilities + what i can do. i'll say what i want + i'll even hit you!

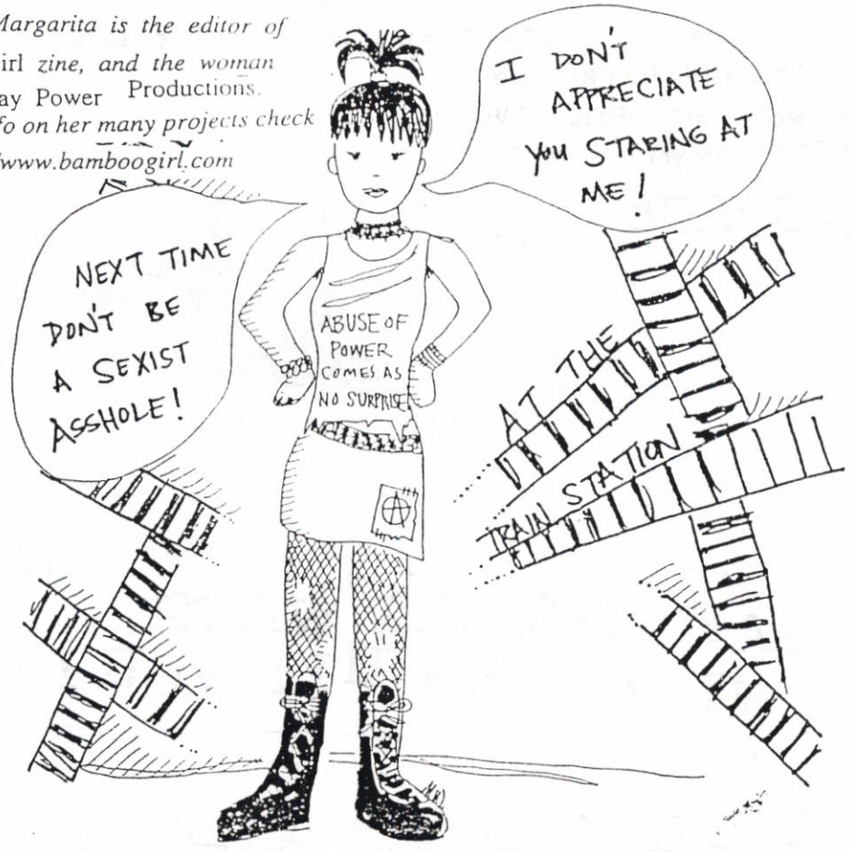
WE'LL SAY WHAT WE WANT AND WE'LL EVEN HIT YOU!!

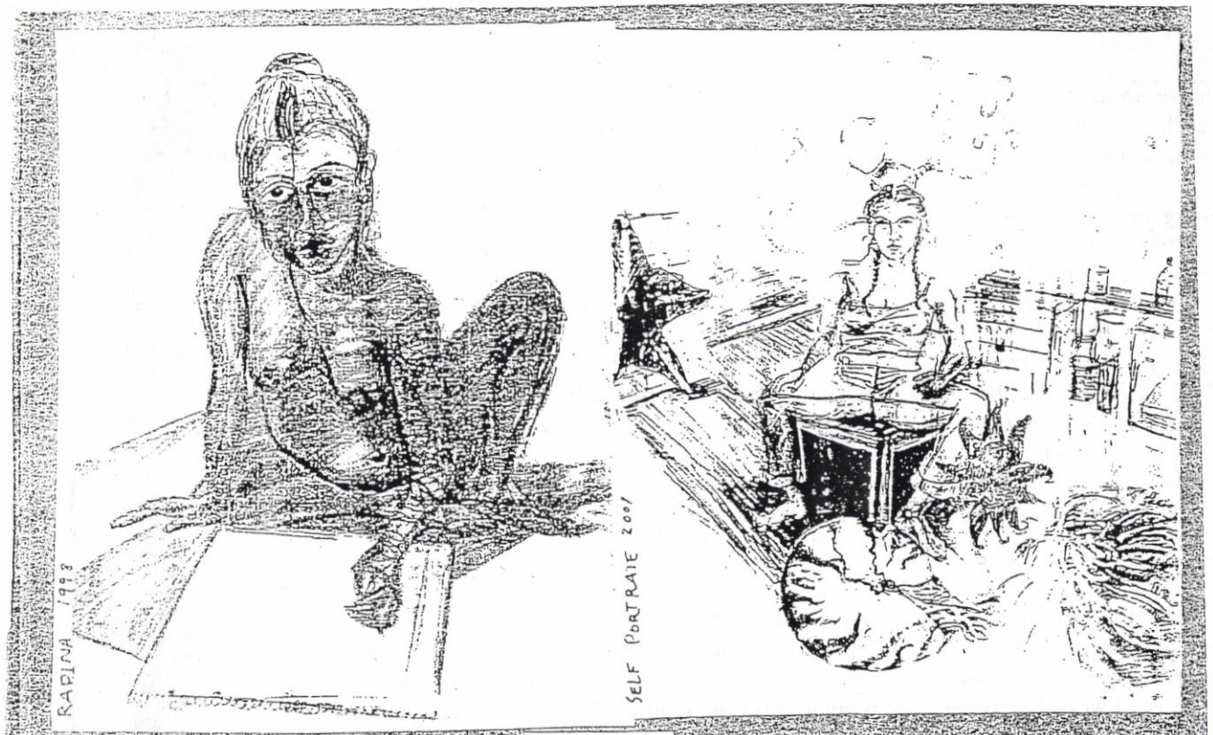
FUCK STREET HARASSMENT!

Addressing It
By Sabrina Margarita

One time, when I used to wear my more 'punk' gear, I was wearing a minidress (that was not clingy nor short), black fishnets with big holes, and my doc martins. Some guy in the subway came over, stood right in front of me, and looked me up and down and continued to stare for some time. I said, "I don't appreciate your staring at me." I was then yelled at by him as a fucking bitch. The train came, we took it, me standing as far from him as possible, then when we got off, we went, like everyone else, in a mass of people, up the stairs to exit. He then came up close to me and whispered, "Next time, don't wear that shit". Thought I really felt like gouging out his eyes and castrating him, I yelled for all to hear, in the mass of people, "Don't wear that shit?! Next time, don't be a sexist asshole!!" I continued to go up the stairs with the other people, and the guy tried to regain his manhood by yelling at me from where he stood, with the "fucking bitch" thing. Though I felt somewhat good for addressing it, it really is draining to constantly have to choose my wars, so to speak, to always have to deal with men who can't control themselves, and to be yelled at by some ignorant boy who doesn't' expect me to verbally defend myself. Sigh.

Sabrina Margarita is the editor of Bamboo Girl *zine, and the woman behind* Pinay Power Productions. *For more info on her many projects check out http://www.bamboogirl.com*





Rapina
By Johanna

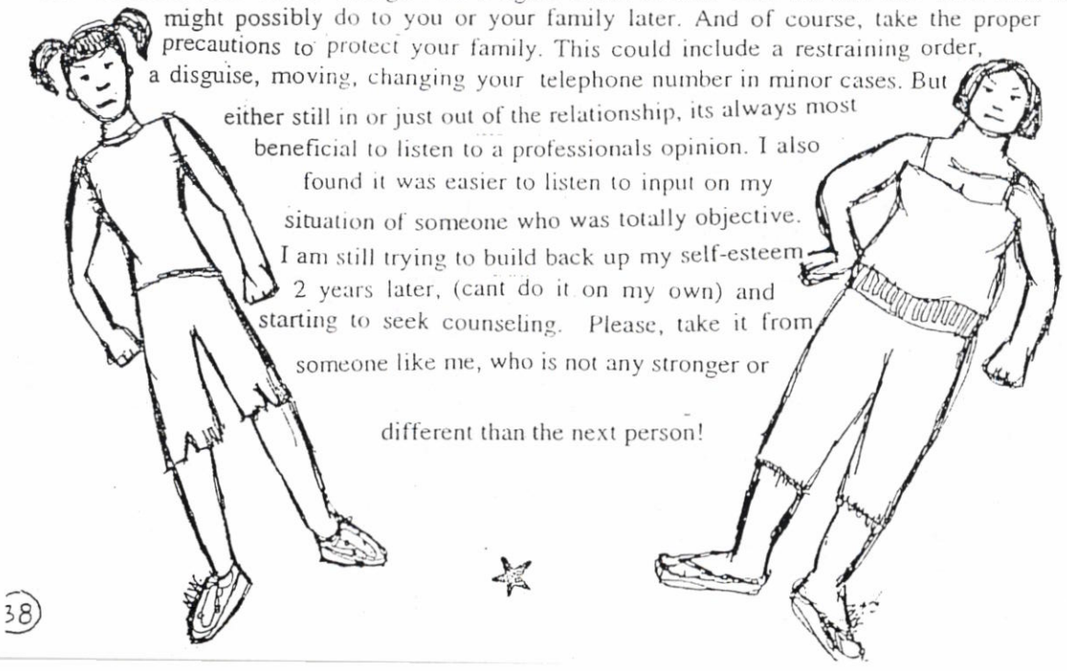
When I saw my drawings I was hit hardest by the difference in the "me"s that I saw and my astute rendering of them; me in 1998 at 23, and me just this past summer, four years later. I am pleased with how far I have come—that's why I was grinning when you kept asking me if I was pleased [with how the drawings photocopied in the zine]. The way the drawings look, and the fact that they are "out there" at all thrills me. I am proud, and grateful that you have compiled this collection, Ariel. I am so bummed that I haven't shared my stories. As you know, their dad and I are no longer going to continue this marriage. I was looking up "Raven" in Spanish, and the closest I could find was "rapina" which also means "to plunder, to assault", and "bird of prey". I did not know this when I chose her name or the name of the drawing, but it is very uncanny.

Back in 1997, C. came home one night, very drunk, and our relations were already very strained. I had already made it clear that I wanted out of the marriage, but each time I brought it up, my attempts at communication were met with threats of "losing" my son, reminders of the fact that he made the majority of the income ("I make $60,000.00 a year, what court is going to give you our son?"), and that I had been an ex-sex worker. His other oft-used response was just silence: he'd look at me like I was nuts or imagining everything, and say nothing. Never before had I felt fear of being judged because of experiences I had had, until I met him. I was so angry because I feared the judicial system would in fact support his sexist bias, and demonize me first for wanting

I Found The Strength

By Sarah

My heart was racing, he was on top of me, and I'm thinking, "What is he doing"?? I was saying "No", and he was pinning me down. He stopped after unzipping his pants (moments before the actual violation), only to tell me how fucked up it was that I was saying no. "He" was my boyfriend and we were in my room. The next day I told myself that it was natural for a boyfriend to expect sex from a girlfriend, esp. when drunk. And you know what? I was WRONG!!!! VERY wrong. When people care about you, they RESPECT you. He almost forced me to have sex with him. I don't like to use this word, (and not many people even know about this) but that's RAPE. Being in a controlling relationship, the men in our lives get us so convoluted that we make excuses for whatever they do. Things we would condemn if done by another person. So I'm writing to say that I was in an abusive relationship, and I didn't even know it until we broke up (because he wanted me to accept his cheating). I can't believe I found the strength but I did and you can too. I was pregnant with his baby, so its not like it was a clean break. But girls (and guys), if you know people that care about you and tell you that your boyfriend is abusing you, they're probably right. You don't even have to break up with him, just take some steps away to see if maybe without his input, you think your family could be right. Love does not outweigh how someone treats you. If you truly think you guys are in love, its probably obsession. On his part, and a desperate need for someone to love you on yours. That was my case. He continued to spy on me long after the break. If it had gone much further, I probably would have gotten scary surprise visits. And yes, any relationship where a man puts a hand on you can result in MURDER. One abusive relationship can be compared to all others. Your boyfriend or husband is not "different". He won't "change". So I figure better to deal with the shit now than what he might possibly do to you or your family later. And of course, take the proper precautions to protect your family. This could include a restraining order, a disguise, moving, changing your telephone number in minor cases. But either still in or just out of the relationship, its always most beneficial to listen to a professionals opinion. I also found it was easier to listen to input on my situation of someone who was totally objective. I am still trying to build back up my self-esteem 2 years later, (cant do it on my own) and starting to seek counseling. Please, take it from someone like me, who is not any stronger or different than the next person!

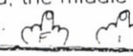


A LOVELY SPRING DAY

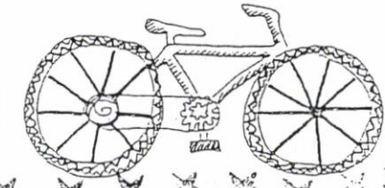
by Megan

I was enjoying a lovely spring day in Chicago by walking around without a destination. As I continued down Damen, I heard someone yell behind me, "Hey I LOVE you in the pink." As I turned around, I saw a quite silly yuppy hanging off his condo balcony awaiting my response. So, (in one of my better come-back moments) I yelled back, "Oh yeah, well I LOVE when yuppies fall off their balconies." I smirked at my own comment and turned back around on my path. I even had the opportunity to inform two women walking the opposite direction about the possible balcony heckler coming up. They thanked me and laughed at his stupidity. And I enjoyed the rest of my day in peace. Yeah, I was wearing a pink shirt, so what?

My middle finger has played a large role in my communication, especially when I ride my bike. Indeed, the middle finger has communicated exactly what I wanted to say so many times...



ON MY BIKE



I was riding my bike a lot and receiving a lot of unwanted and unsolicited comments from car drivers and even pedestrians. I would normally yell back or use the trusty old middle finger. Getting sick of spending my bike rides yelling, I decided to do an experiment. What would happen if I wore a lot of safety gear (which I really should wear anyways) like a helmet, reflective lights and bands next time I ride. Would safety gear create an untouchable force field around me? Would the gear de-sexualize me to the passer-by enough to deter commentary? The end result was that the safety gear did not stop the street harassment that had become the soundtrack to my biking. I came to the conclusion that people were gonna keep yelling so I was gonna have to keep yelling back!

I'm not pulling a trick. I just want a free ride:
A lady's account of hitchhiking

By Midge

The popularity of hitchhiking has dwindled over the last few decades, perhaps mostly due to the decline of people's trust in others. Hitching can definitely be tough work and somewhat more intense for wimmin for somewhat obvious reasons. There is the problem of, 'all it takes is just one nutcase.' The fear of this one lone nut has kept us inside, immobile and in line for years, right? After all, it is the same lone nut that keeps us off the streets at night. However, despite the pending risks of sexual assault, murder, drunken drivers, reckless drivers, arrest, discouragement, getting lost or stranded, getting sprayed with pesticides, robbery, mosquito bites and asphyxiation from exhaust inhalation, hitchhiking can also be a positive and empowering experience.

Nice stuff to expect (from friendly drivers) besides free rides, free meals and free beer include getting driven straight to places you need to be (sometimes even if it's a few hours out of the drivers way) and occasionally being treated to hearing lengthy dissertations on interesting affairs, such as the state of the global economy. How nice some of the drivers were surprised me at first, but it makes sense to me now. Considering that most people here in the states would never hitchhike, they deduce that they somehow must be 'better off' than you since they would never voluntarily put themselves in the position that you have put yourself in. A lot of guys also have this whole fatherly attitude about it, looking out for you as if you were their own, sometimes even trying to infringe a bit on your independence by asking you to promise to never hitchhike again and stuff like that (just like a real dad would do). Other people, they just pick you up for excitement. In these cases you are actually doing them a favor, because they want to live vicariously through you. Other common reasons people pick you up include: to relieve boredom, to keep awake, to get help with driving, to rescue you from danger, for company, for free therapy, to convert you to jesus, to warn you about the dangers of hitchhiking, to revile hitchhikers or to keep their karma straight.

Now, for the not so nice stuff... Realistically, any female-type persyn is potentially vulnerable to assault at any time, no matter what she is doing/wearing/etc. Moreover, it is nearly inevitable to run into men who are putting out all possible forms of sexual tension. Even men of the most mild and considerate appearance will probably try, however ineffectually, to cop some kind of sexual energy from you. There are, however, some ways to minimize the risks or curtail the effects.

The question is: how do you fend off the topic of sex? Failing that, how do you get them to knock it off? Here are a few basic strategies. The first involves the concept of legitimacy; as a legitimate humyn being, you are a legitimate traveler with legitimate reasons for hitchhiking. The more legitimate you are, the less you can be seen or treated as an object. Unfortunately, for a lot of men, a womyn cannot be a legitimate humyn being unless she's a 'good girl' (and sometimes not even then), but only a 'bad girl' would be hitchhiking. You are more likely to be a 'good girl'

Trusting Your Gut

By Rebecca

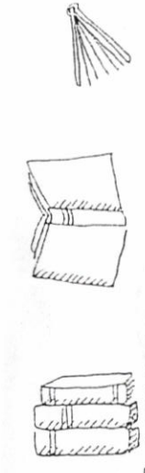
When I was 16, I was set up on a blind date with an older guy. From the moment I saw him something in my gut told me that something was wrong.
I pushed away those feelings by telling myself I was being judgmental.

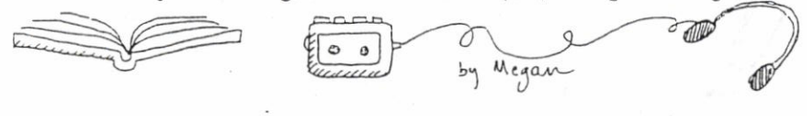
On that first date he used intimidation and manipulation to sexually assaulted me. For three months after that he assaulted more times than I can remember. At the time I knew what he was doing was wrong but I didn't have the words to describe what I was going through and couldn't explain the situation to anyone else. He acted like all the fucked up stuff he was doing was normal... so I figured I must be the crazy one. I kept myself sane throughout those hellish months by defending myself verbally and physically when I could and disassociating my mind from my body when I couldn't.

After I was able to end the relationship, my mind and body helped me stay safe and keep going until I was in a place, years later, where I could deal with what I went through. My body would make me physically ill anytime I came near places that guy hung out—so I stayed away. My mind continued to numb the parts of my body he had violated. I defended myself without even knowing it! While it wasn't the most pleasant way to learn this method of self-defense, I learned it well. Trust your body!

LIBRARY JERK(OFF)

I was studying in the library. I liked to isolate myself in a cubicle with books and a walkman and do a lot of reading and research without distractions. I chose a spot on the fourth floor. i hadn't noticed that as it approached closing hours I had become the only person on that particular floor. A man came up to the cubicle next to mine and sat down. I didn't immediately react because I was nestled into my cubicle reading. But then I began to feel my body react to this person's presence next to me. What was this dude doing sitting next to me when there were hundreds of other places to sit on this floor? As I leaned back in my chair to get a better view of the situation, I saw what was really going on. Dude was sitting in a chair which he had turned to face me and was jacking off. Awesome. I obviously wasn't gonna finish reading this chapter. So I got my stuff together and got up to leave. As I did I yelled, " What do you think you're doing? Get the fuck away from me!" He ran away. I tried to make it down to the first floor to let the librarian know and possibly confront this guy as he tried to leave the building. When I got to the first floor, I asked loudly whether anyone had seen someone run out. It was then I realized that dude had looked like Joey from that stupid TV show, Full House. Would the librarian get my pop culture reference? By that time, he was already gone but I let the librarian know what happened. I was a little shaken up so I went home and talked about it with my roommate. She was really supportive and glad that I yelled at him and he responded by backing off. Now when I go to the library I still study alone but I try to be aware of my surroundings and sit within other people's sight/ hearing.





said that since we were such good friends now I should give him a call sometime. The sick fuck had given me his phone number! I yanked my wrist away and ran into my dorm. I wish I could say that I immediately called the police or got a posse of friends together to kick his ass, but I didn't do anything until two weeks later when a friend urged me to call the police.

On a less empowering note, the police were incredibly cruel when I called to report the crime. The officer I talked to actually asked me why I didn't just get into a different cab and informed me that they couldn't do anything about the crime even though I knew the guy's first name, cab number and had his phone number! But the police department's inaction led me to a lot of action that has since enabled me to better defend others and myself. I became a certified medical advocate for Chicago's Rape Victim Advocates*—now I get to make sure that when a survivor wants to talk to the police, they are taken seriously. And I created a piece of installation artwork about sexual assault to help my own healing and educate others.

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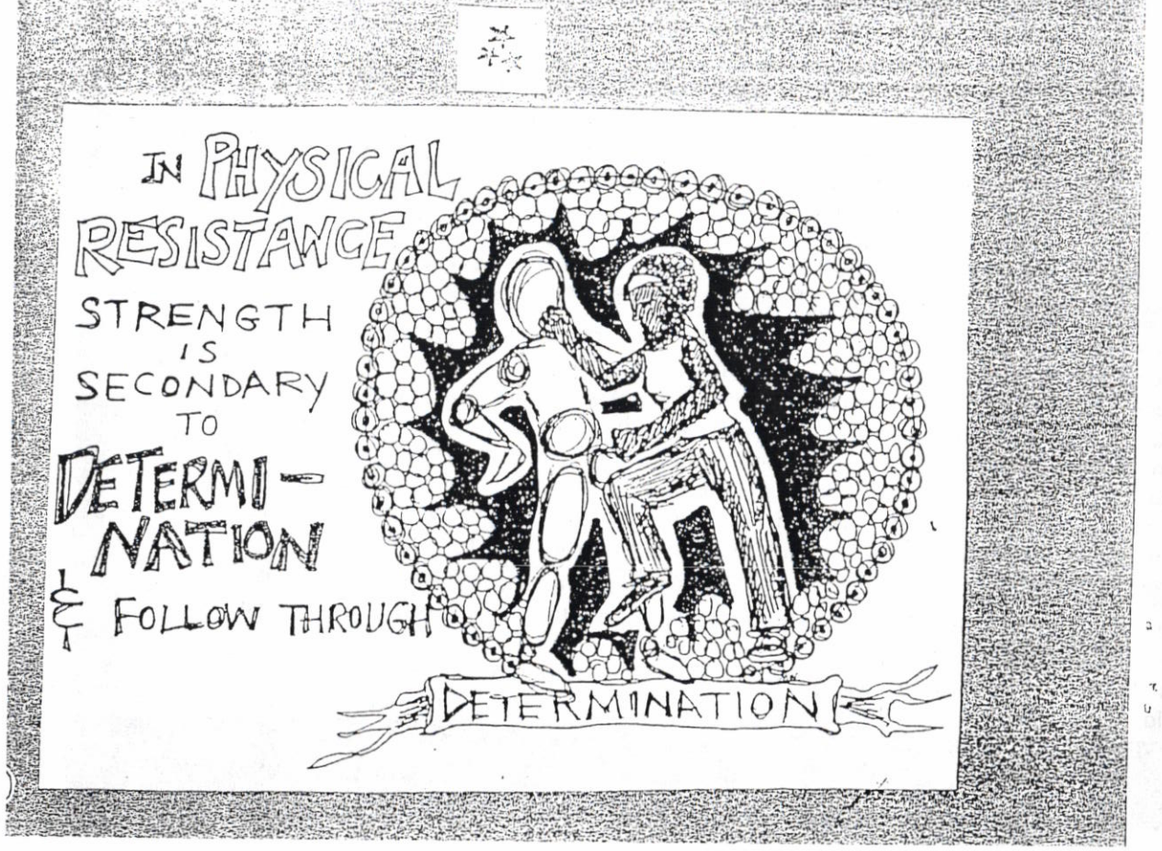
http://www.rapevictimadvocates.org



hitchhiking if you have 'good' reasons to do so, like going to visit your fiancée or trying to get home for the holidays.

Another great way to increase your legitimacy is to come across as the drivers' daughter-figure, or sister-figure if he's younger. Playing the daughter/sister involves appearing to be from the same background, displaying relatively the same opinions and, of course, appearing relatively naïve and upright in matters even vaguely approaching morality. This means deflecting subtle pitches.

Of course, if you're tired of deflection, you are never under any obligation to continue riding with anyone. Chances are the next ride that comes along will be great and everything will be fine even in semi-deserted areas. If, for some reason, you are ready to terminate the ride and you don't feel confident that you can get his cooperation by being truthful with him, casually find some plausible excuse to get out. This is when it becomes important to have your belongings really close to you at all times. Unless I feel really comfortable with someone, I try to keep my bag on my lap, rather than in the trunk or the back seat. Two wimmin I know were hitchhiking and this guy was giving them a ride and being all weird. He kept talking about sex and stuff, so they said they had to go to the bathroom and had him get off at the next exit. Once they were out of the car (with their belongings), they told him that they weren't going to ride with him anymore because he was making them feel uncomfortable. They then went on to add that, in the future, he shouldn't act that way towards wimmin hitchhikers ever again.

If the whole casual approach doesn't work and worse is coming to worse, you could threaten to strip his cars' gears or bail out of the car if it is going slow enough (remember to roll). You can also do whatever you can to attract attention and possibly scare the attacker at the same time. Use whatever is at hand as a weapon, or more importantly, study up on self-defense techniques that don't require anything but your fists and your feet. And, if you must physically repel your attacker, don't do a half-hearted job of it. This always has the potential of escalating the situation. In general, keeping a relatively calm (but stern) attitude and no-nonsense body language, despite whatever is going on, will aid you in the situation.

Remember:

1. Bring a map. You don't want to have to rely on other people's directions.
2. Bring a marker. Making a sign stating your destination often improves your chances of getting picked up by someone who is going where you would like to be.
3. Bring a flashlight or bike light if you plan to hitch through the night.
4. Carry practical clothing and shoes, a hat and/or sunscreen for being by the side of the road and a sleeping bag and/or tarp for sleeping there.
5. Carry phone numbers for any people you know in the towns you will be passing through as well as shelters/hostels in the area (even if you don't plan to stop).

6. Visually scan the cars that stop to pick you up for anything sketchy: alcohol, weapons, automatic door locks, etc.
7. Ask the driver a few questions before you get in the car (like how far they are going, how long it will take to get their, etc.) to get an idea of whether the ride is worth it and/or you feel comfortable taking it.
8. Trust your intuition. If you think a ride is bad news, it probably is. Make up an excuse to refuse the ride if you need to, like waiting for a longer ride, a ride with more room, etc.

Self-defense Tips:

- Prime targets are eyes, nose, temples, ears, throat, collarbone, kidneys, knees and groin.
- Hit high and low, over and over, to whatever targets are open.
- When hitting, imagine yourself striking through your target to increase the force.
- Yell HAA!, NO!, or DIE! Loudly, every time you strike.
- Hit fast and hard with all your might. Don't hold back a thing.
- Use weapons only if you know how to use them and are not afraid to use them. Otherwise, they can provide a false sense of security and can escalate the situation or be used against you.

Midge also does The Radical Slut Dis-Covery *zine listed in the resources section of this zine.*

Hell Cab
By Rebecca

The evening before I had to move out of the college dorms my freshman year, I went out and spent the night at a friend's apartment. I woke up early to walk home and pack my last bag. It was warm Chicago morning in June.

Wearing a white sundress from the night before I didn't realize until I got outside that walking home wouldn't be a great idea since it had begun to rain. I concluded that white clothing plus lots of water makes for a potentially embarrassing walk home. My next best option was to hail a cab; that task was easier said than done. After being passed up by at least 10 cabs one finally stopped. I lived close by, but when I got in the cab the driver informed me that he had just received a call from dispatch saying he had to pick up another fare immediately. I wasn't in a big rush so I told him I'd rather be in the cab than in the rain and he assured me he'd drop me off right after this run. On the way to pick up a stewardess who was traveling to O'Hare, the cabbie and I chatted and laughed. When we pulled up to the stewardess's apartment the cab driver told me it would be a good idea if I sat in the front seat with him since she was his "official" customer at that time.

After a pleasant drive to an O'Hare bound subway stop where the other woman got out, I didn't think anything of staying in the front seat of the cab.

Unfortunately, the cab driver did think something of it. He began to tell me that he thought I looked tense. He reached over, while he was driving, and started to massage my neck. A thousand thoughts rushed through my brain. I made an attempt to circumvent his reason for touching me and weakly tried to intimidate him by saying "that's not tension, those are muscles... I work out." But my allusion to my strength didn't deter him (and I'm not surprised... I'm sure he knew I was all talk). He simply moved his hand from my neck to my arm and began to feel it saying, "Oh, you work out? Let me feel those muscles." I froze like a deer in headlights.

When I got my thoughts together I used the old broken record technique. Every time he attempted to touch me again I would tell him to quit it and that I'd prefer he drive with both hands on the wheel. Usually I'm more of a screaming and cursing kind of gal when someone attempts shit like that, but in this situation I was in a moving car, which he was in control of and I sure as hell didn't want to piss this guy off—who knew what he might do to me or where he might take me if I did that. The whole time he was making attempts up my skirt and down my top I was watching for a moment when I could jump from the car... but there wasn't one. The asshole just kept grinning the whole time; he looked like the kind of guy who fed off of fear.

I tried to appear calm, knowing that my best bet was to keep focused and alert and keep the situation from escalating if I could.
Miraculously, he pulled up at my dorm. I bolted for the car door, but he grabbed my wrist. As he held me he scribbled something on a cab receipt and then handed to me. Before letting go, he